

Demon Girl ~Tale of a Lax Demon~

Book 4 - The Demon Princess

by Day Of Spring

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Prologue: Lurking in Dark Places

A declaration of war was made by the Daemons towards the human nations.

As a result, the human nations, especially the commoners, felt an unfamiliar anxiety and shock. However, the Daemon Kingdom's residents who received this announcement from the Daemon King were even more surprised and confused.

The Daemon territory was named such for the sake of differentiating it from the human nations. Although there was the [Daemon King], a symbolic existence that all respected, the land was actually divided into three portions, each one its own independent [State].

The Daemons and demi-humans that resembled humans lived in [Gitez], which was under the direct jurisdiction of Daemon King Hebrad.

The Beastmen and those who resembled beasts, lived under the Beast King Gallus' [Vosto]

As for the Demon-like demi-humans and the intelligent monsters, they lived in [Herteldeath] under the Dark Princess Killian.

The three nations of the Daemon territory could hardly be called monolithic. Even though they nominally paid respects to the Daemon King, each of them looked down on the other two and have been squabbling with each other for hundreds of years.

The only reason why the three countries hadn't completely destroyed themselves in infighting yet was the existence of the Daemon King and their shared hatred of humans.

However, despite having a common enemy they continued to have skirmishes amongst themselves, and, while that was part of the nature of the Daemons, there were also some that were afraid of a full-scale war with the humans.

In the 2,000 year history of Daemonkind, there had been several invasions of the human nations performed in the name of the Daemon King, but they all ended in failure. After each time, the Daemonkind would end up going into a

recession.

The reason why Daemons had staved off destruction up until now was because of the humans, even though they could exterminate the Daemons and claim their territory, the territory itself wasn't desirable.

But with things as they were now, with an invasion of not one single country, but declaring war on every human nation on the continent, the humans might actually unite and try to destroy the Daemons.

For the selfish Daemons, although they would normally rebel against the Daemon King at the drop of a hat, right now the Daemon territories were in a state of great confusion.

One of the highest pillars on the totem pole of Demonkind... the 【Demon Beast】..... 【Dark Beast】.

Manifesting after devouring the magic power accumulated over decades, it flew away at once from the Daemon King's territory, the Demon Beast returned again, coercing those who lived in the Daemon territory to help him gather [Magic Power].

While the Daemon King was looking for sacrifices to offer it, he thought that it would be necessary to devote thousands of people and Daemons, but the Demon Beast's 【Manifestation】 didn't need a vessel, it only wanted enough Magic Power from the Daemon King to remain.

In the upper floors of the Daemon King's castle, several of the local lords and tribe chieftains were gathered in various conference rooms. In one of them that was spectacularly decorated and equipped with superior soundproofing and magic defences, the King and his aides were gathered together, staring at each other with bitter expressions.

“...Daemon King-sama, what is the meaning of this...?”

A bewitching... yet young voice reminiscent of a pretty maiden, calmly... asked... Daemon King Hebrad, in a poisonous tone.

The Dark Princess Killian. She looked like a beautiful black-haired lady, but her lower body was that of a snake, long and scaled, and her tail was touching the back of the room 10 metres away.

“What are you going to do about that 【Demon Beast】! And on top of that, declaring war on all of the human nations, does Your Majesty have any stratagems to secure victory?!”

A lion beastman that exceeded 3 metres in height... Beast King Gallus slammed his thick arm on the obsidian table as he called out in anger.

At that state of affairs, a dark-skinned Daemon in the prime of his life grabbed his sword, and released both magic power and a bloodthirsty aura toward the two.

“You are being rude to Daemon King-sama!”

Taking in that bloodlust, Gallus laughed as he bared his fangs as his fighting spirit surged from all over his body, while Killian was... she narrowed her eyes and the atmosphere chilled.

“...Let’s leave it at that.”

It settled down... but the slightly tired voice of the Daemon King Hebrad caused the presence of all three of them to be slightly shaken.

“B-But...”

“It’s fine. Darnell, you must have restraint.”

“...Yes”

One of the Daemon King’s aides, Demon General Darnell, who was in charge of the domestic affairs of Gitez, backed down at Hebrad’s words while staring at the two of them.

“.....”

“.....tch.”

Killian’s lips edged slightly upwards with interest, while Gallus clicked his tongue as if someone had rained on his parade.

“.....”

Another man was staring at them... A Daemon usually had a slightly longer lifespan than a human, but he was so old that nobody else even remembered how old he was. He refrained from the quarrel, smiling slightly.

Daemon Mage Geas. Including this old man, who could be called the head magician of the Daemon King's Army, these five people were the heavyweights that held in their hands the power to make decisions over the Daemon King's Territory, and all of them were participating in this meeting.

Besides, even if more people were to be called to this meeting, the heads of each region would only be looking out for their own interests, and nothing would be achieved.

Hebrad let out a sigh, seeing that the Daemons had fallen to this state, and began to speak without a care about his prestige.

"Although I can understand what you're saying, leave the matter about the Demon Beast to me. I also do not know what it is thinking, but it desires magic power right now. We will try to make the most of the current situation."

".....Do you intend to fight the humans with that Demon Beast...?"

As Killian said as much with an unreadable expression, Hebrad shook his head slowly.

"It is to let the humans know of its existence, and use it as a precaution. If you don't know when the Demon Beast might attack, you cannot move your armies easily."

Furthermore, it would be difficult to send relief forces from other countries due to the fact that the Daemon King had declared war on all of the human nations.

"So while the humans are taking these precautions, will we be crushing them one at a time? Is it finally that wonderful time?"

Gallus' face was in a grimace, but it seemed that for the time being, he would listen to what the Daemon King had to say.

"I have decided that for this war, the first strike of the Daemon King army must take down a human nation."

"Haah?!"

"....."

Hebrad's words took Gallus and Killian by surprise, and even Darnell, who'd

heard it beforehand, began to sweat profusely from his forehead.

The Daemon King's army was comprised of everyone who lived in the Daemon King's territory.

Not to mention the various occupations, excluding the infants and bedridden, the soldiers of the Daemon King army would exceed 70% of the population of the Daemon King territory.

For those who knew even a little about human wars, that kind of strategy was insane.

However, Beast King Gallus smiled with delight at the Daemon King's words.

"Kill them... is it alright we pillage and eat them?"

"That's right. Take everything from them. Bind the war slaves with fear, and use them as the vanguard against other human nations. You may kill the rest and eat them."

"...Ooooooh"

How simple..... Unlike Gallus, who was strongly affected by bestial instinct to be able to kill humans and to be able to commit as many atrocities as he liked, Killian gave Hebrad a cold glance before bowing her head down gracefully.

"Since it has been decided, I will be releasing all of my soldiers. ...doing things as we like is fine, right...?"

"...I don't care."

Hebrad nodded to Killian's loaded words with nary a change in his expression.

"Then, I shall be heading back to my country..... Our next meeting shall be on the battlefield, Daemon King-sama..."

Leaving those words behind, Black Princess Killian calmly left the conference room. It might be that in the confusion caused during the war, she would make her own moves to secure an advantage.

Killian believed that the strength of the Daemon Race came from their [Monstrous] blood. She would continue to take aim at Hebrad's life when the opportunity arose.

In order to make herself the Daemon King.....

The Daemon King could only see her off with a sad look from behind.

No matter how shrewd and clever she was, she didn't understand the state of the Daemon Race after all.

The resource-poor Daemon territory, didn't even have enough stores to spearhead an attack.

Just to move even a portion of the Daemon King's army would necessitate taking a large portion of the food of the Daemon territory, and if that happened, those who were left behind would have to scramble for what was left.

For this reason, Hebrad decided to take everything with them, and abandon those who could not fight.

If they raided a human country, killed everyone, and took the rest, then there wouldn't be a need to bring food for those he ruled.

It was a foolish all-or-nothing strategy that was practically a suicide attack, but because the Daemon Race was a belligerent one that thrived on raiding it was enacted.

"....."

Hebrad's heart was heavy, if he said so himself.

Unlike all the previous wars up to this point, the Daemon race might be entirely wiped out if they lost. If their stamina dropped, if their march started to slow, the human side would be fully prepared.

For this strategy, it could be said that the key to victory would be in getting the Daemons stupidly intoxicated in raiding.

The two foolish Daemon Lords left the meeting room and returned to their countries to prepare for war.

There wasn't a true 'strategy' per se, but once the target and the movements to the target of the Daemon King's army were decided, there was little else to be said.

Even Daemon General Darnell, who was from the intellectuals of the Daemon Army, was no exception. He left, following Gallus and Killian's exits, and was now gathering the generals.

"Even Darnell, is also like that, huh... when will it be that I will give up on the Daemon race?"

Daemon Mage Geas, who was left in the conference room, finally voiced out his impressions for the first time towards Hebrad, who was there alone with him.

".....It takes time for them to understand. They have never received an education on these matters."

"There is very little of that time left."

As Hebrad spoke with a bitter tone, Geas' voice was almost mocking.

Although Hebrad didn't have much knowledge in that direction, he'd introduced some [Modernised] tactics to the Daemon King's army with Geas' help.

However, since it was based around the endurance and rationality of [Humans], the Daemons who lacked both weren't able to execute it.

"Hebrad, don't strain yourself. Well... I suppose I shall return too. Don't worry, I will give you my full cooperation in this strategy."

".....Why, why are you going so far to cooperate with me?"

Hebrad's voice gave Geas, who was holding onto the doorframe, pause, and he turned around.

Geas wasn't one of Hebrad's subordinates in the beginning.

While Hebrad was working on reforming the Daemon King's territory with methods that were unusual to their world, Geas suddenly appeared and talked to him with

nostalgic words.

"Oh? It's someone with the same [Hometown]."

"....."

Only Hebrad and Geas realised that there was going to be no future for the Daemon territory.

Even if they did nothing, once the Demon Beast finished absorbing the magic that it demanded, only a future in which the Daemons would be eaten by the Demon Beast and utterly destroyed remained.

Thinking of silver linings, Hebrad thought that the only chance was now, since all the Daemons were gathered now by their fear of the Demon Beast.

If they delayed the gathering of magic power, while mostly absorbing the war potential of the human nations, and didn't destroy the Demon Beast with all that, then the Daemons would not survive.

How did this happen..... what went wrong?

Hebrad couldn't help but to pray to the God of his fate, the Demon God, wishing for it to please light the path of survival for the Daemon Race.

* * *

At that moment, a certain 【Demon God】, was performing a summoning experiment at the cave in the basement of Count Orbel's house, trying to dispose of the large quantity of 【Octopi】 (Devilfish) that had been summoned. Together with many vampires and Demons, they were trying to make dried octopus and cuttlefish.

It's a seafood festival.

Classification Supplements:

【Demon】 Resident of the Spirit World. Loves humans. Likes souls that are syrupy and full of flavour.

【Spirit】 Resident of the Spirit World. Loves humans. Likes the lightly-flavoured magic power that leaks from souls.

【Human】 Resident of the physical world. Delicious. Lifespan of 70~80 years.

【Elf】 Resident of the physical world. Their way of life is full of variety. Lifespan of approximately 500 years.

【Demi-human】 Resident of the physical world. Dwarves and Beastmen, etc.

Lifespan of 50~120 years.

【Daemon】 Resident of the physical world. A mixed-blood group with both human and demi-human and monster blood. Incredibly hot-blooded. Lifespan of about 120 years.

【Monsters】 Residents of the physical world. Magical mutants. Vampires are under this, too.

【Animals】 Delicious. Somehow tend to attack travellers.

Chapter 1: I became a Fourth-grader, Part 1

A year has passed and I'm a 4th grader, now.

Of course, I hardly ever go to school... so having a school arc was completely impossible, after all.

There was a declaration of war from the Daemon King, but the Holy Kingdom of Tariterudo is still too peaceful.

Since Tariterudo is far from the Daemon territory and a 【Holy Boundary】was stretched across the whole country in preparation for the 【Demon Beast】from the start, the magic that the Daemons' riders use can't break through it.

Though I had a hard time making sure that my attendants weren't affected.....

Also, given that the brand-name products of this country like the [Hero of the Holy Kingdom], the [Holy Paladin], and the [Saint of the Holy Kingdom], the public is naturally at ease.

I was having doubts about Rick's fighting strength..... but when I thought about it, once he'd been given that [Title], it seems that the 【Spirit of Light】have sort-of stayed, and the skills of the two have been going up. It's different from the self-proclaimed hero.

Although that Vampire beauty Millaine-chan did mention once that the Holy Kingdom was the "Land from which the Holy Ones were born," was this it?

... The blessing didn't come to me, though. Spirits-of-light, won't you speak just a little? Eh, you're sleepy? Is that so...

Although there were [Intelligence Reports] that came from who-knows-where that said that the Daemon King's army was using the 【Demon Beast】, even then it was still relatively calm.

After all, since I had repelled the Demon Beast, 【He】had openly declared that I would be his first target, so the ambassadors from the other countries were unexpectedly sympathetic to me. Internally, though, they were just relieved that their countries were safe.

Still, being the ambassador of a small country that didn't have much military strength, we couldn't entirely stamp out the feeling of unease, so it seems like I'm going to have to go on a Saint (Idol) tour once again in the meantime.

..... Is it okay if I don't sing?

What I meant earlier by too peaceful, is that tonight there's a [Party for the Heroes of the Holy Kingdom], and I'm attending this ball.

"Millaine-sama, you came."

The ball was organised by the merchant guild in the capital. When Zest-san who became the new Duke Kapell called out to Millaine, who I had forced to attend, a large amount of people congregated around her... made entirely of males, who trembled as she met their gaze.

...What the heck's with those reactions?

"Yurushia-sama, I am feeling a little warm, so let's go outside to the terrace."

"...Eh, Millaine-sama?"

Millaine, who gave the man an elegant smile, left the men surrounding her, and took my hand, heading to the terrace.

Because you're feeling warm, huh..... Although there isn't much in the way of temperature differences here between the seasons, is it winter now?

"Millaine..... please don't use me as your pest repellent."

When I took off my [Duke's Daughter] mask out on the terrace, Millaine also reverted from her [Countess Successor] mode and sighed heavily.

"Well... I can't help it if a [Soul] that's that thin approaches me."

Millaine is 18. As the beautiful maiden called the [Silver Princess], she was already remarkably popular. Now that she was tentatively the head of the Count's house, a large number of marriage proposals from the second and third sons of other aristocrats aiming to become the son-in-law of the house came fluttering in.

Millaine used to lavish smiles upon everyone regardless of gender previously, but after I taught her how to distinguish what kind of person would have tasty

blood, she's totally become an [Gourmet].

"Oh, that reminds me, I have the *prototype*, Millaine, would you like to try it?"

".....Please."

When I brought out the octopus tentacles that I've secretly brought, Millaine received it with a sullen face.

".....These things that come from the basement of my home..... they're annoyingly good."

"It's not merely good. It's delicious, no?"

"But, my hands still stink of the ocean after handling these....."

Only the two of them were on the terrace at this party..... seeing the [Golden Princess] and the [Silver Princess] talking, many eyes watched them intently.

In the midst of this, the dried octopus that was seasoned with souls for the consumption of the Demons that lived in the Holy Kingdom was being concealed by the Demon and Vampire aristocrat with a fan. Yup, nothing to say about that.

A portion of the 【Octopi】 were being sold by the Carpe company, but it wasn't popular with human beings... even though it's so delicious.

"When you look for a groom, will you be searching for a noble with a rich soul, to be able to make him a vampire?"

"Not yet. I'm not that desperate in terms of age yet."

For a noble lady, it was best if they married by the age of 20.

"Come to think of it, when does a vampire reach adulthood...? I mean, aren't you actually dressing younger than you are? Millaine, aren't you actually over 200 years old?"

"...Yurushia-sama, please don't make people sound like they're grannies. There's no reason that Vampires should age, you know? I haven't changed a bit since I became a vampire in my late teens."

"Really? I thought that you grew a little since we first met....."

"It's because I tampered with my own bones and muscles, not because I was

forcibly changed. Well, it's best to be between one's teens and twenties...Are Demons different?"

"But I'm growing naturally, though."

"...That's... not entirely normal."

When I replied readily, Millaine had an amazed face as she muttered under her breath 'Yurushia-sama is really irresponsible...' Hey, that's rude in various ways.

I think that my core is that of a [Demon], but since I have a human's mind and body as well, I don't know how it's been affected.

I'm growing normally, but I wonder if I'll grow old? If so, there won't be a problem for me to live as a human being, but that hope is slim at best...

Perhaps, if my body is just trying to remain in its [Optimal] state, I may not even have a fixed lifespan.

".....Hey, Millaine, what do you think of those two?"

In my line of sight, were two boys that were surrounded by noble ladies and young knights in this extravagant hall.

Rick and Noel. Aged 13 and 12. They're on the cusp of growing into adults.

While I came to this ball being escorted by the two of them, since so many people wanted to talk to the Holy Paladin and Hero, we've been separated.

Even then, only the religion-related people are talking to me...

"Well~... 50 points?"

"Eh...? What's with the scoring system? Rather, why that amount of points?"

If she says it's because of their looks, I'm going to fill Millaine's house with seaweed.

"Although they seem to have tasty souls, it's a pity that their combat power seems to be low, since they're young."

"I-I see..."

It was a surprisingly serious assessment. I was surprised.

I hadn't meant to hear her evaluation of their fighting power... Well, I guess it's a mistake to ask a [Non-human] for their assessment of a human.

I have few people I call friends.

For human friends I guess it's Shelly and Betty, then Noel and Rick.

The two girls seem to accept [Me] as I am more or less, but what about Rick and Noel?

Especially Noel, who is now the [Hero of the Holy Kingdom]-sama, what will he do if he ever discovers that I'm not human?

...Even if I'm worrying about it now, it can't be helped.

Now, what I have to worry more about is 【Him】.

Even with 【His】 disposition, I don't think that I'll be having a rematch with him before he 【Manifests】 a body.

I'm sure 【He's】 saving up power now.

And by the time we have a rematch, I have to decide "Where we stand."

Until then.....

"Millaine, are you going out to *play* soon?"

As I asked her with a Demon's smile on my face, Millaine had an astonished face and her eyes brightened.

".....That is, the Daemon King's army?"

"You're tired of the underworld of the Holy Kingdom, no? It's too peaceful for a state at war. Perhaps the backers of the underworld are with the Daemon King's army, so why don't you go and play with them?"

As I said so, Millaine smiled wryly and leaked out a small sigh.

"Finally, I'm not working behind the scenes."

"Go out to play, go play. Seriously, I don't really understand that Daemon King. To give such a grand declaration of war like it was nothing, I don't get it at all."

".....Ah~..."

"...Hmm?"

Millaine suddenly leaked a voice of understanding, even as she stared into the distance.

..... What's that? Did you figure something out?

Anyways, it's really peaceful.....

I had asked my attendants to go and [Keep an Eye] on the Daemon army...
you guys, you're clearly doing something on your own, aren't you...?

Chapter 2: I became a Fourth-grader, Part 2

Half a year has passed since the Daemon King declared war on all of the human nations.

In the three human nations that bordered the 『Forest of Monsters』 which was close to the Daemon's territory, forts had been constructed in various places and mercenaries had been contracted in preparation of the invasion of the Daemon King's army. In the last six months, there had only been minor skirmishes with the Daemon army's scouts and beastmen bandits, along with small groups of monsters.

So, where had the Daemon King's army gone?

What had they been doing up until now, and what were they doing now.....

“GyaaaaaaaaAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!”

A beastman, wearing a slightly stained armour, stabbed poorly-clothed other beastman with a spear.

Even though they were both Beastmen, while the one who had been killed looked like a human, the one who was wearing the armour looked like a wolf with a reptile's eyes. After being splattered with blood, it licked its own face with a snakelike tongue and a distorted smile.

The Daemons... a mixed-blood group of abandoned humans and demi-humans and monsters.

The agonising screams of death were the only thing that could be heard.

They who were armed with rusty swords and spears, wearing thin and dirty armour, had struck a small village, killing and looting its fleeing inhabitants with extreme cruelty.

The 『Forest of Monsters』 that separated the Daemon territory from the human nations was a dangerous place where monsters rampaged, but there were also a few villages within it.

There were people who separated themselves, being unable to accept the

way of the Daemons. There were humans who had chosen to share their lives with the beastmen and Daemons. There were slaves and stragglers who'd run away from human society.

These people had gradually congregated, seeking escape from both humans and Daemons, and had built a village in this dangerous forest, and although they feared the Daemons, they were able to eke out a bare-bones life.

That is, until today.....

"M-mother"

A five year old cat-eared young girl was crying, her face distorted as she shook the still body of a bloodstained human woman.

"Tch, she died so easily, it's going to be a pain in the rear to transport."

As the lizard beastman spit out his complaint, he ripped off a piece of meat and shoved it into his mouth, sloppily chewing.

"I think I'll eat the innards first... Oi, brat! I'll take you back as my fresh food, so just be docile until I eat you."

"Heee..."

The Daemons who had thick monster blood would even stoop to eating humans or other beastmen.

The soldiers of the Daemon army attacked all the settlements, pillaging all the food from the villages, killing everyone but the young women and children, as they were tasked with bringing back playthings for food and 'comfort'.

However, this was a mission in name only. Even if they were left to their own devices, the Daemons would have done the same by instinct.

There is not a single one with the heart of a 『Person』.

For the Daemons, anyone weaker than they were were existences to take from, and they wouldn't come to a mutual understanding even if they talked, only ever seeing the weak as livestock.

".....Hmm?"

A lizard beastman realised that the area was strangely quiet.

Wiping the bloodstains from his mouth, he could only hear the muffled crying of the little girl. Even if he strained his ears, he could hear nothing else at all.

There were ten-odd of them who had raided this place. There were only about 50 people in the village, so it should have been easy to annihilate, so it was unnatural that he couldn't hear any of the women or children making tormented noises or screaming.

"What's going on...? Brat, you're coming with me!"

"...N-Nooooo"

"Shutup!"

The little cat-eared girl was struck and went silent, and the lizardman left the roughshod cabin with his spear.

"Wha..."

As the lizard beastman walked out to look, he saw all of the villagers that they had killed..... and all of his comrades with their swords and spears at the ready... had become

stone statues.

"What the... this..."

The lizardman couldn't recognise that those stone statues were his companions.

Why were there stone statues that looked like his companions? Where did the people that he had personally put into place go?

Maybe they'd found prey and had intentionally left him out of it, and he felt indignant that he had been made a fool of and that they'd run off without telling him.

As a lizardman, who was of limited intelligence, he didn't understand that this situation was due to an 『Enemy』.

"....."

The lizardman noticed a petite person walking about the centre of the village. Looking completely out of place, it was a human girl dressed up in a white

apron over a black dress of excellent make.

More than her unperturbed expression, even in the face of this miserable scene, she was walking about as if she were on nothing more than a calm stroll while on her errands, which was even more strange.

“.....Hehe...”

Looking at the pretty girl, with her beautiful blond hair and soft, not-yet-adult flesh, the lizardman smiled vulgarly. ...But,

“...He-Hey, girlie.”

Rushing towards the girl who looked like she was walking slowly past his eyes, the lizardman hurriedly lowered his spear and called out to her to stop.

“Oi!?”

But that girl didn’t stop walking at all, as if she hadn’t heard a voice. The lizardman’s face twisted with anger, and he rushed towards her, stabbing his spear.

buchii...

There was the sound of fibres being torn...

“.....Excuse me. May I help you...?”

“.....e.....a”

Snatching away the lizardman’s spear in an instant, tearing off
both of his arms

and throwing them both away like garbage, the girl turned to look at the lizardman for the first time.

“.....a...GyaaaaaaaaAAAAAAA!!!!!!”

His brain finally catching up to reality, the lizardman fell to his knees even as he screamed out in fear and pain.

The girl looked down coldly at him.

“If you have no business with me, then I do.oh?”

Even as the lizardman’s piteous screams went on like the BGM, the blond-

haired girl looked at the terrified catgirl who was staring at her with fear in her eyes.

“.....”

“.....”

As the girl stared quietly, from under the feet of the cat-eared girl, something was giving off a vague steam.

As the girl continued to stare at the child who made an accident, she spoke
“...Please be quiet.”

She casually stuck her hands into the chest cavity of the screaming beastman, and pulled out his heart without making a single sound.

...*gehi*

Without even glancing at the lizardman who had grown quiet with a strange sound, the girl offered that blood-covered heart to the cat-eared child with an expressionless face.

“Want to eat it?”

“.....!?”

The little girl paled and shook her head vigorously.

“Is that so... Then... will you be eating this?”

The young lady faintly knitted her eyebrows, and then swallowed the bloody lump of meat in a single mouthful, taking out the dried seafood from her pockets and presenting it to the little girl.

“.....”

As expected the little girl didn't refuse, as she received it in shock. The young lady patted the little girl's cat ears, and the edges of her lips went up slightly, then vanished into the forest outside the village.

She loved cats.

By sheer luck, there were villages on the way to her destination, and she couldn't resist the charm of the 『Cat Eared Ones』 while she removed the

obstacles in her way. Tina had stroked them instinctively when she fed the little girl, so she continued towards her original destination with a *satisfied* face.

“.....Cats don’t like hearts.”

She wrote in her love diary about her most beloved master.

Chapter 3: I became a Fourth-Grader, Part 3

In a giant tent in the Forest of Monsters, Black Princess Killian was biting her black claws in frustration.

Half a year ago, the whole of the Daemon King's army began to prepare after the Daemon King had made his proclamation.

Some of them objected to the reckless strategy, but most of them couldn't bear the terror of the 【Demon Beast】, and gladly prepared to flee the Daemon territory.

Even though the Daemon King's army was called an 'army,' it was more like a group of rampaging monsters in reality.

As expected, the main forces of the three states grouped up and moved out together, deployed early in the New Year, three months after the declaration of war. As for the others, the local lords and various tribal chieftains of the various regions took their hundreds and thousands of men and headed towards the human nations on their own.

A month after passing through the [Forest of Monsters], they thought that the scout troops would have come into contact with the humans..... but there had still been no results.

Even the battle reports never came, and none of the scout units' locations were known. While a few traces of battle and dozens of dead bodies were found, about 200,000 troopers had simply just disappeared.

The Daemons prided themselves upon their strength; hence they didn't pay serious attention to it. At most, it merely resulted in laughter that they didn't get to have any of the prey at all.

The Daemon Lord that was the most familiar with the Forest of Monsters, Black Princess Killian, promptly advanced the main force, built up a base and started an invasion... But, there weren't any battle reports from any of their units, and the Forest of Monsters was strangely quiet, as if frightened by something.

“.....Could I be, has the Hero has come?”

The one passed down through the Daemons’ legends, the natural enemy of Daemon kind. A human butcher.

However, only those who had received the [Blessings of the Light] were true heroes, and that type of hero, unless an [Evil] powerful enough to destroy nations came, would not appear in human society, it *simply couldn’t appear*.

“.....What’s happening?”

As Killian lost her patience, her black snakelike lower half uncoiled, smashing one of the furnishings brought from the Daemon territory to smithereens, and the terrified maids drew back.

“I will be heading out personally..... tell everyone!”

“Ye-yes!”

Black Princess Killian’s forces were composed of: 270,000 Daemons who had thick monster blood, 320,000 Intelligent Magic Beasts, and with a 150,000-strong Beast-rider cavalry, it was an army totaling 740,000.

From them, 250,000 of the more fleet-footed ones would advance together under the command of the Black Princess.

Without using the forest roads, in the face of the undulating terrain of the forest, they seemed like a tsunami rushing forth swallowing up the forest.

Normally, Killian would never have taken such rash actions.

Her usual style of combat would be to set up a trap and wait for prey to fall into it while she drank her time away.

But another, more serious, problem was approaching than merely not knowing the identity of their enemy.

It’s been several months since they started invading from the Daemon territory... The food that they’d brought was starting to run out, so were the lower-class monsters and animals that they’d hunted. If the situation stagnated any further, the Daemons might start cannibalizing each other.

“Everyone charge! Charge until you’ve either reached a human dwelling or I

allow you."

Before anyone knew it, Black Princess Killian was riding at the front of the army, carried by a beast chariot pulled by four huge snakes.

".....!?"

Feeling a chilling sense of dread, the four serpents stopped moving.

Although they only felt it for a moment, and while most of the soldiers didn't understand what they'd felt, the intelligent monsters and the feral magic beasts of the cavalry felt something of the presence's true nature by instinct, and the whole troop stopped moving spontaneously.

The riders urged their mounts, but the mounts and beasts didn't move.

Within, Black Princess Killian realized that it was an aura of [Killing Intent] with an extreme range, and she glared into the depths of the dark forest as cold sweat ran down her back.

"Who are you...? Show yourself before thou!!"

Due to her pride as a Daemon Lord, Killian raised her voice, and thrust out her own [Calming Intent] towards the depths of the forest.

"....."

When she felt the [Killing Intent] only subside slightly and her subordinates continued to stay silent, Killian began to bare her teeth and radiate bloodlust.

Up until now, nobody had been able to ward off her Killing Intent and still produce this level of Killing Intent other than the [Daemon King].

Who lay beyond? She didn't think that someone else of Daemon King Hebrad's level existed, although she strengthened her caution given that it might be a [Hero] or [Saint]-level existence.

As the killing intent of the Black Princess dispersed, a few of the mount beasts foamed at the mouth and began to collapse... a small humanoid emerged as if cut out from the depths of the forest.

It was a beautiful young lady with curly, gently-fluttering golden hair.

Dressed in the high quality clothes of a human aristocrat's maid, she walked

quietly with her hands in front of her, and seemed like either a noble or a lady-in-waiting of the royal family.

Although she looked horribly out of place, her iron expression and icy eyes told them that the girl wasn't just a simple human.

".....Who are you?"

Pulling back her bloodlust, Killian's voice was held up with the dignity of a ruler, and the girl picked up the hem of her skirts without hesitation, and lowered her waist in a curtsey.

"I, am one of the attendants of the noble [Princess], 【Gorgon】 Tina."

At those irreverent words, a surge of anger and bloodlust came from Killian's admirers.

To remain unfazed even in front of an army of over several hundred thousand, and on the contrary, declaring that she served someone who was a greater[Princess] in front of the [Black Princess], everyone was shocked and some even doubted whether she was sane.

"...Gorgon...? I've never heard of such a word... is that your official position?"

Hearing such a strange word for the first time, Killian continued to try collecting information the enemy that they couldn't afford to relax their guards against, and continued the conversation without foolishly exerting her killing intent.

"It's just the name of my race."

".....Hohooh, so does that mean that you're not [Human]...?"

Tina didn't answer Killian's question, but merely returned an elegant smile. At that creepy smile that lacked any sense of kindness, Killian felt the atmosphere was like swallowing a lump of lead.

The sheer pressure of her appearance, a creepily beautiful young woman that looked exactly like a real human being was unnerving.

Although there were Daemons that looked like humans too, this felt like a completely different existence from them.

There was also the matter of that [Killing Intent] just now. Could such a small girl release such an overwhelming Killing Intent...? That there was a large crowd behind the girl, and hearing that there was the [Princess] there, she was convinced that the rest of them had been intimidated by that horde behind the girl.

But... that wasn't it.

If there was an army sizable enough to make one feel such a level of Killing Intent, there was no way that they wouldn't have perceived their existence.

If... If this girl wasn't just an envoy of the battle ahead, but really had come here alone...

What kind of [Monster] was she to produce this level of Killing Intent...?

It's impossible. Thinking about it, Killian lost the mood to continue the conversation with that insolent young girl, and looked down at her as she uttered just one word.

".....Kill."

As she spoke, several soldiers behind Killian leapt out soundlessly.

A wolf man, a girl with wings for arms, a one-eyed giant, and a horned man with scaled skin:

They who were called monsters, unlike the beast-men, attacked the girl who had made a fool of their Lord together.

Gagon...

".....!"

Killian was thrown into a state of shock, and gasped in spite of herself.

The four fiercest of her bodyguard that had served her for many years, had become [Stone Statues] in an instant and fell to the earth while maintaining their momentum, rolling away.

[Petrification] was rare, but it wasn't her first time seeing it.

Apart from the portion of Daemons that would have their flesh and magical power slowly harden because of [Disease], the cases of [Petrification] were all

because of magic crystallizing the impurities within the body, or cases where they were trapped within a stone-like material and then hardened.

However, it was impossible to do any of them in an instant, and it was mostly commonly seen as a trap or a form of torture in places where one was trapped and unable to run away, it was a magic that didn't kill.

But...

There wasn't a single sign of [Life] from the four bodyguards. They had been killed in an instant.

"...Kill her!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

Killian shouted out with all her strength.

In order to release the petrification, they either had to perform rituals of Holy Magic or kill the caster.

It also had to be done within a few hours to preserve the lives of the victims, and although they were already dead, Killian still couldn't help but shout it.

If it had been Hebrad or Geas, they might have been able to respond a little more calmly, but for the trap-loving, always-victorious Killian, this was too much to bear.

An unknown magic... an unknown existence... Not knowing was more terrifying than anything.

"Well then, I shall begin the extermination."

An indifferent voice came from beside her.

"...!?"

Killian instantly leapt back and shook her giant snake tail. The blow that would have sent an elephant flying, was stopped by Tina's tiny hands, and half of it was cut off.

"GyaaAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!"

As the Black Princess screamed, the dumbfounded soldiers struck Tina all together.

"....."

Tina gazed at the 5 metre long snake tail, and then threw it behind her into the depths of the forest, tearing into the hundreds of Daemons around her with the golden snakes.

As they choked on their own blood in their death throes, the curly golden hair turned into countless snakes, and as Tina put on a devilish smile, the soldiers' faces cramped in fear.

Wherein Tina was looking for the Black Princess whose tail had been torn to pieces.....

"AhahahAHahAHAHAHAHA!"

As the ground shook with the echoing of her laughter, she approached Killian.

"Don't come closer, stay back! Hiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii..."

Although the soldiers were all trying to protect Killian, they were too close to Killian to use magic. If they approached they would be torn up by golden snakes, while if they retreated they would be petrified by that red gaze, and with the angry screaming, the scared fleeing, and the crying and confusion all mixed together, the battlefield became chaotic.

The **【Arch Demon】【Gorgon】** created by the golden **【Devil】**.

Tina was inferior to Noa in attacking power, worse than Nia at defending, and worse than Fannie in mental attacks and strange powers.

However, her overall combat ability outstripped the other three, especially when battling in the physical world. Even among all of the Arch Demons that existed in the Demon World, she was unrivalled.

But, even for Tina, hundreds of thousands of troops was too much.

She deliberately provoked the enemy, didn't kill the enemy general, and harassed them while throwing them into chaos, if they had been allowed the time to recover their wits, their numbers would have been a threat.

"This is so much fun, but no..."

If she delayed any further, she would be late for her master's dinner.

Tina took out a small golden key from her pockets and thrust it into the air.

“Open.....【Paradise Lost (Lost Eden)】”

In that instant..... the battlefield was enveloped in 【Blackness】.

It wasn't night. It wasn't darkness. The sunlit [Forest of Monsters], was simply replaced with an empty space devoid of anything but blackness.....

As it happened, the 250,000 soldiers were all filled with a fear of something next to them.

The new race of Greater Demon that had manifested with vampires as its vessels... all 500 of them were there.

A special type of Demon that had a body which resembled a human's, they was clad in warped armor and were armed with black, visibly cursed, swords.

The Greater Demon all gave a cry of delight at the large amount of [Food] that had been given to them by their lords.

“At least, it's protein this time. I don't want seaweed anymore...”

* * *

Tonight's dinner... as I was enjoying the [Grilled] food that Tina had gathered, I turned to ask Fannie who was waiting on me.

“This is quite delicious ... what is this meat?”

“Snake. Because its grease is delicious, I was told to hunt it—”

“Fuu~, snake really is delicious, isn't it?”

I can't help but wonder, when is the Daemon King's army going to get here...?

I should probably go out on my Saint (Idol) tour soon.

Chapter 4: The Holy Saint's Adorable Everyday Life,

Part 1

As I'll be turning 11 soon, I decided to visit the countries close to the Daemon territory as a Saint.

Actually, I was going to fly~ over there with my servants, so that I could spend several months enjoying myself before teleporting back. I had made plans for a trip with us alone, but I seem to have been found out before I knew it...

"Noel...?"

Noel comes over to my house often. The threshold for entry had become slightly lower since he's become a noble too, but now when he walks through the door he's not the son of a Viscount, but the [Hero].

".....Lucy..."

Noel didn't run up to me like a puppy like he normally did, but rather walked up to me with a slightly lonely expression.

By the way, nobody told me that he was coming. If there is a visitor, you guys should inform me... in the shadow of a nearby pillar, I saw the maids and the attendants giving me covert thumbs-up... What are you guys doing?

"Noel, what's the matter? Ba... Bar..... where's Bear-san?" (Piro Note: she keeps forgetting Barnabas, lol)

"... I'm not having training today, so the group... Father didn't come along. Putting that aside..."

Bear-san and Noel often came to practice with the knights and to practice coordinating with me, but now Noel's come alone. He walked up next to me, and gently held my hand.

... Ah, as expected he's holding my hand. It's alright because I'm still a child, but will I still be able to be married if Noel turns 15 and becomes not 'safe'?

As a 13 year old, Noel was 10-odd centimeters taller than I was; he knelt in front of me all of a sudden.

"N-Noel, what's wrong?"

"Lucy..... Will you rely on me?"

".....eh?"

As he looked straight into my eyes, I felt a little itch in my heart.

"Why are you trying to go alone to a place near the Daemon Territory...?"

"Ah... err..."

Where did it leak from...? It's probably one of those maids-in-waiting.

That aside, what do I do? I thought about deceiving him, but his face wasn't his usual puppy face, and I was off put by his grown-up expression.

"Aren't I the same as you, Lucy? People who are in trouble... I want to help the people who are suffering."

.....Eh? But I just want to go sightseeing?I can't say that now.

"...Umm, Noel,"

"I understand your feelings. Therefore, I will go whenever and wherever Lucy goes."

"U-umm..."

Oh crap, I've lost the chance to speak. Noel interrupted my words, calmly..... and while smiling gently with determined eyes, he touched his lips to my hand.

"I..... am [Hero] that will always stand beside the gentle hearted [Saint]....."

"~~~ ..."

Dangerous..... Even though Noel himself is turning bright red Still, since I don't have any resistance, don't hit me with such a big surprise attack.....

..... Behind us, the maid-sans, were all being annoying with their *kyaa~ kyaa~*.

"Yurushia....."

"Ah...Roderick-onii-sama, did you finish your greetings?"

At a social gathering that was held every few days..... well, it's just an evening ball, but Rick was surrounded by foreign aristocrats and their daughters until he

came over to me, who was surrounded by greasy ministers.

..... For some reason I feel that there's an unreasonable [Difference].

"It's over. Don't talk about it."

"Is that so..."

As soon as he got to me he already had his pouty face and sullen voice... That's probably why all those ministers all took their leave while sweating profusely.

It's not my fault to have parted from them after Rick arrived, right...?

"Come over here"

"Yeah..."

Rick stretched out his hand for a moment, and stopped halfway... ooh, I thought that he would grab my arm again but he's finally growing up.

We walked out to the garden. Because we're so conspicuous, we can't be hidden from view by simply going to the terrace, so to speak without being disturbed we took a stroll in the garden at night.

"....."

".....Rick?"

As Rick walked silently without a word, I changed my term of address and called out to him.

What happened? Rick wore a different look than usual while he craned his neck a little to the side, and then quietly spoke.

"...I am weak"

".....?"

But you're not as weak as you were before...?

"Although I was given the title of [Holy Paladin] for participating, Noel and I are just not an equal match for Yurushia."

"....."

The [Holy Paladin] was a precious treasure of the Holy Kingdom and different

from the Holy Knights, rather, it was a title that was rather similar to being a [Hero].

The hero with the protection of the light was the hope of the people.

While the Hero was the guiding light that lit the way for the people, the Holy Crusader wielded the power of the light to avenge the people's suffering upon their enemies.

In other words, it means that the Holy Crusader must be stronger than the Hero as an individual.....

"I have to become strong as the [Holy Paladin]. If you head to the Daemon territory, I will too."

".....Rick"

Rick is also following Noel.....

"Although I thought that I could defend Yurushia, but every time you've protected me..."

He's aware of it himself..... I'm unable to refuse Rick whenever he displays his straightforward [Masculinity].

Well, in any case, if Noel is coming, I can't refuse Rick either.

To me, since Rick was a young kid when I first met him, I've always taken him lightly.

As I reminisced about the old days, the moment that the eyes of our chaperones were obstructed by the shade of a tree, Rick grabbed my arm and pulled me in.

"I cannot lose to Noel."

"....."

It'scloseit'sclose your face is too close! We're almost stuck together!

Did Rick realize it too? His eyes went wide momentarily and drew apart, returning to holding my hand with only one hand and walking again.

What's going on, hmmph? You're not meeting my eyes.

Anyways, various things happened, but it seems that the [Holy Kingdom Hero's Party] can't help but head out together.

But still, we're being accompanied by a team of escort knights again..... Our Hero's Party is basically being accompanied by chaperones.

“.....eee~tto, are you all coming with us too?”

Since my departure has become public knowledge, naturally my guardian knights from the Ducal household, along with Vio, Fell and Min were going to be accompanying me as my caretakers.

“Naturally. Ria-sama specially instructed us to take care of Princess Yuru-sama.”

As Vio replied for them all, Fell and Min both smiled and nodded behind her.

“Aren't we just sightseeing?”

I'm mostly focused on the sightseeing.

“Of course we understand. I haven't hugged Yuru-sama lately, but I can't force it even if I'm lonely.”

“Oh yeah, about those local guide books that Yuru-sama told us to order, I've made special arrangements.”

Oi.....

Well, the maids that have been taking care of me since I was young... even now that they're my ladies-in-waiting, these three girls still worried about me from the bottom of their hearts.

..... Isn't that right? This doesn't have a vacation-y mood?

Aren't all three of them newlyweds..... is it alright to leave their husbands alone.....?

These three girls... Now that half of their twenties have gone by, if I was asked to introduce them marriage partners, I would have decided readily on anyone that was convenient.

Vio was with a single bachelor steward who was in his 30s, Fell with a young knight under the Duke, and Min with the sous chef of the house.

Did you all ever date anyone else before? I think that the three of them just chose partners that would allow them to continue prioritizing their current work..... I'm okay with that, though.

Well, I interviewed them too, and I was relieved since they're all good people.

Since I had a serious personal interview and put them under [Killing Intent] for an hour or so until they started to cry, I don't think they'll cheat even if they're about to die.

Because of that, it seems that the husbands have all said that [If you are by Yurushia-sama's side, I'll be relieved] and I've acquired a strange trust.

I am but a weak noble lady.....

If this trend continues in the following years, I wonder if I'll have to be the one finding husbands for the 15 girls of the escort knights as well. To be blunt, it's a pain in the rear.

Those girls, when they saw that the [Holy Saint-sama(me)] give the blessings at Vio, Fell and Min's weddings at the behest of the priest, they've all been brimming with eagerness to receive my favor.

Oh, come to think of it, they aren't my [Escort Knights] any longer.

It seems that they became the [Saint Guard Squadron] when I became the [Holy Saint].

They ranked up. Their equipment was completely changed too, and it can't be helped that I had to turn to Zest of the Carpe Merchant Association and ordered 15 magic swords for them.

It was a huge expense. My private slush fund was halved.

Regarding my own marriage..... For me, since my sister-samas' returns are a delicate matter, will I have to take a groom into the family?

Aunt-sama of the Shiguresu Royal Family's fierce promotion of her son is scary.

When I brought up the topic with Mother-sama discreetly, it seems that seven marriage proposals have come from the royal families of the surrounding countries.

Including a newly-born third prince..... what are you all thinking?

..... Is that my bridegroom?

...Ah, I got off track; this was supposed to be a story about my Saint (idol) tour.

Since someone might ask [Saint-sama, sing us a song], I can't avoid singing practice..... It's just in case? I don't really actually want to sing, promise...

The estimated journey will take several months, and it absolutely wasn't purposely scheduled to be on my birthday.

So, Grandfather-sama, please stop throwing a tantrum. Please don't try to inspect the border? Since I'm going to break through it with my ability.

Chapter 5: The Holy Saint's Adorable Everyday Life,

Part 2

We left the Holy Kingdom headed towards the [Warrior Nation Taterudo] in the north. I wanted to head there directly, but in order to do that we needed to cross two countries to our destination.

Since we're more or less a party made up of the Royal Family and the Hero-sama, we can't just pass through without stopping, and so we've been forced to stay an additional week or so for parties and parades.

Taterudo gave us an opportunity to go and visit their weapons workshops, I guess that's par for the course for the Warrior Nation. Isn't a new-model magic sword supposed to be a state secret?

Eh...? I can buy branded magic swords here cheaply.....?

While suffering damage to my wallet and heart, I arrived at one of the three countries near the Daemon Territory, [Kolkopo].

Although the country's name is pretty cute, it seems that they're in quite a troubled state as a small country.

The royal family of this place had a pretty little boy who's turning 10 years old this year.

"I a-am Ko-kokokokoko-ko-Kolpo, Yu-Yuru-ru-Yuyuyuyu-Yurushia-sama, it-it-it's nice to me-mehehehehe meet you!"

..... Hah? It's funny to meet me? Kolpo, who had suddenly said something ridiculous, turned bright red and was carried away to the medical quarters.

I'm used to being feared by older uncles, but being feared by a cute young boy, I was overwhelmed for a moment.

Oh, come to think of it, this child's name was on the list of children who were proposing to me. I wonder if the marriage proposal's been called off. Well, it'll work out.

It was a light evening party with everyone who was involved with the war.

After it ended, we stayed at the castle and I decided to go down to a small town by the front lines the following morning.

Zupah! Making such an onomatopoeic yell, Rick sliced through a monster.

"Noel, there's one there!"

"Roger, [Wind that rules all, blow violently like a blade]...Wind Blade!"

Noel's wind magic cut the giant raccoon Daemon in half, and Rick rushed over to deal the finishing blow with the Golden Magic Sword (No. 3).

Yup, I made Rick's sword!

It was made with the soul of the [Daemon Race Female Black Knight]

..... I didn't get that snack. *sniffle*

As one would expect of Taterudo that's close to the Daemon King territory, it's not rare to see [Monsters] spring up. Well, they're weaker than a Hippo or Rhinoceros.

But even so, normal magic is still being used as needed.

By the way, that last word seems to be shouted. Invoking spells in the simple [Spirit Language] seems to be easier to activate if you pair the image with the words.

[.....Splendid!]

When the battle ended, applause and cheering came from our [Guardians] behind us.

This time around the Guardians were 12 Holy Knights, 24 Royal Palace Guards, 15 Saint Guardian Knights, 80 Soldiers of the Royal Capital, 6 Royal Magicians, and 30 people from Bear-san's mercenary group.

..... Are we intending to start a war? When we got to Kolkopo, the border guards' faces were cramped.

From where the guardians were sitting, calls of [Your Highness] and [Steady, Boy!] were heard, and Rick and Noel's faces went red.

..... What's up with that?

As we went along, we were only allowed to fight the monsters and the younglings that showed up.

It's training..... but it feels shameful.

The Holy Kingdom's Hero party was a 4-man composition comprising Noel, Rick, me, and Nia, who had been praised by the Holy Knights in the fight against 【Him】.

Nia stood out in the end. But well, she's mainly my guard.

“.....”

Rick and Noel, who were deeply embarrassed, came back to me with delicate expressions.

“It's been hard on you two, would you like some tea?”

“.....No thanks.”

“.....What are you doing?”

Apparently the two of them want to say something to me.

However, after I apply the Holy Magic of Protection, there's almost nothing for me to do, so I've just been drinking tea at the table Noa prepared for me.

“But the tea sweets are pretty and delicious, you know?”

“No, that's not what I mean..... Haa...”

Rick, who tried to say something sighed lightly and Noel soothed him with a strained smile.

They're at a delicate age. Rick is 14 years old, so maybe it's something like [My demon sword seeks blood]?

As we were doing that, we slowly arrived at the town on the front lines that evening.

It's a distance that we could have travelled and arrived at by the early afternoon if we had gone directly with the knights leading the front, but I promised not to complain.

Now then, here is the main event, ma'am.

There's no single place that could accommodate such a large number in a small town like this, so Rick and the Holy Knights were put up in the local lord's mansion. Noel and the rest of the mercenary group were preparing to camp with the soldiers. My close guardian knights and the children reserved a large inn room to spend the night.

Finally, we separated.

"Princess-sama, Vio and me are done with the inn arrangements~"

Deputy Captain Sara-chan came to report to me. Because they were dazzled by the new equipment, the snot-nosed children (little brats) were all running around her.

"Thank you for your hard work, please also tell Bree-chan to take a break. Please don't drink too much, okay?"

"I-I understand, Princess-sama."

"Honestly...?"

Well, since we've come to such a dangerous place, I won't scold her much. But for the sake of warning her, I pulled Sara-chan's cheeks softly since her expression was still fidgety after giving her report, but she flushed red and thanked me with 'Thank you very much.'

I don't understand exactly what she's thinking.

"Tina, Fannie, prepare me some [Traveler]-like clothing."

And this, I changed my clothes and escaped out the window of the third floor.

I was dressed like a normal traveler, but since I couldn't do anything about my shiny hair I gave up and did it up in a ponytail.

By the way, the [Black and Silver Saint's Dress], has been transformed into a choker around my neck.

When I tried to take it off, it transformed into that..... This is cursed equipment, isn't it...!

There are a large number of mercenary groups in this town at the moment.

There were those employed by the country, those who were hired by other

countries to collect information, and there were those who were here to gain military accolades when battles happened, there were even some who just hunted monsters for materials.

All these people were gathered here in mercenary groups, so the city was full of life, even though it is at war... the security's getting worse, though.

Because there're so many muscle-brained rascals around, many of the bars in this town are completely filled up... or more precisely, because there weren't enough for them, the public halls and communal spaces have been opened, and the merchants came down to sell food and alcohol , so it was almost like a simple food court.

It's a place where information tends to gather. It's also a place where materials that I haven't seen before are sold.

It's also a place where the spies from other countries and the Daemon King were mixed.

Ufufufu, isn't it a fun place?

The bar is for 15 year olds and above, but my height is between a 12 and 13 year old, and Noa and Nia are 14 years old so it won't be so obvious.

Giii~... *Gatan*...

As I opened the door and walked in, some mercenaries that saw me fell off their chair, and the sound of a glass of ale dropping to the floor was heard.

..... That's an intense reaction. Although if you think about it properly, it's normal?

For the time being, I suppressed my [Presence] and proceeded inside without stopping to take notice of anything. Only Noa and Nia were accompanying me; Tina and Fannie were left back in the room.

If anything happened at the lodgings, there wouldn't be any problems, as Fannie would come pick us up while Tina dealt with the problem. Also, it's just my luck that I left the two troublemakers behind.

The building was larger than it looked from the outside. Although I was able to conceal the signs well, it seems that I astonished several people near the

entrance with my appearance.

"Little Miss, hold up."

Someone stopped me on my way to a vacant table.

Is this that thing? The "This isn't a place for kids" moment, and the signal for the start of a legitimate [Bloodbath]!?

While I was thinking that way as I turned around and gave him my best smile, the older guy who'd called out to me turned red and froze in place.

"...What's the matter? Hey."

".....N-no, sorry Miss, it's just that-..... please forget it."

".....Is that so."

As I uttered my disappointment, a younger older guy who was at the same table as that other guy suddenly spilled his ale through his nose while looking at me.

The older lady at the next seat also stared at me with her mouth wide open as she accidentally poked her forkful of chicken into her nose instead of her mouth. Is that a custom in this neighborhood?

"Gallus, what are you doing?"

"...ah, boss..."

Looking back at the older guy who first called out to me, there was the form of a good looking young man in his late twenties.

When the youth who called out 'boss' saw me, he had his breath taken away a little, and I gave him a *proper* refreshing smile.

The [Properness] is important. I don't give these to the young greenhorn upstarts.

"Excuse me, Miss. I am Elmer, the head of the [Hawk's Eye Mercenary Group]. Did my members do anything rude to you...?"

"No, although they seemed to have some business with me....."

When I responded in my [Prim and proper Young Lady]-mode, he glanced at

Gallus and sighed a little.

"I'm sorry. Also Gallus isn't a bad fellow, but he must surely have been thinking that it's dangerous for an adorable lady like yourself to come to a place like this..."

"So that's what it was... I appreciate your advice, but....."

"So young and yet you're so proper. Are you here for [A Meal]?"

"Yes..... and I am also here for some [Shopping]."

Playing back and translating the current conversation,

[“There’s no way you came to such a place just to eat, is there?"] [“Of course not, I’m here to buy and sell information.”]

That’s what it was.

"Well, then, why don't you have a meal at my table as an apology? I'm also a merchant, so I think I can advise you."

"Thank you. Forgive my late greeting, my name is Lucia. I will accept your generosity."

Elmer's [Hawk's Eye Mercenary Group]-which is not a very apt name-seems to be a major mercenary group on the scale of 100 people.

With a friendly demeanor, his group members spread out the table as he called out, and he took us to our seats on the second floor, which was lightly partitioned and looked over the first floor.

"Does Miss Lucia drink alcohol? If tea is alright with you, there is some good eastern tea, how about that?"

It's different from the tea from the Dream World, but a mercenary that was this considerate was unusual.

"I like both. I am sure that whatever Mister Elmer chooses will be the best."

"Hahaha, that's quite a heavy responsibility. In that case I will have them serve this sweet regional fruit wine that was stocked just the other day. It tastes better when chilled. Will the two of you be alright with that?"

He interacted with Noa and Nia properly too. Is this a success?

"As the war continues, it would be difficult to continue shipping special products..... I hope the war will end soon."

"I agree..... It wouldn't be a problem if the [Hero] could hurry up and defeat the Daemon King. Oh yes, Miss Lucia. Did you know that there's been talk of the [Hero] recently in this region?"

Well..... talk of *which* Hero?

Chapter 6: The Holy Saint's Adorable Everyday Life,

Part 3

"A few months ago, a party of people claiming to be the Heroes of Shiguresu came in, and after staying for a month, they travelled into the Daemon Territory."

Rumors of my elder sisters.

From Elmer's words, it seems like the residents and mercenaries here all gave skeptical looks towards this sudden party of [Heroes].

When such a huge event happens, many self-proclaimed Heroes appear among the young people of the countryside, and for the towns near the Daemon King territory, it almost seems like a travelling bard.

But, well, even if one didn't have the recognition of the Shiguresu Royal Family, it was entirely possible to call yourself the [Hero of Shiguresu]. It's the [Freedom] of the thick-skinned.

"When they first came, they went hunting in the [Forest of Monsters] and brought back materials. But after they created problems for the mercenary soldiers who cooperated with the hunters for the materials, and the mercenary groups complained. I heard that they'd given the group a word of warning."

".....I understand how you feel."

Those people are the types who cause problems for others easily.

They're people who've read too many fantasy novels. You're free to hunt monsters, but if you hunted around this town, you needed to receive a request from the local lord, and needed to get along well with the local hunters who paid their tax dues to the country.....

"So, what happened to that self-proclaimed Hero?"

"To tell the truth, that Hero, shouted out that the dish called [Tempura] was invented by Shiguresu, and seriously injured eight mercenaries while laughing, especially that magician girl who did a pretty terrible thing with her fire magic. I

heard that they'd been chased off by the military police and headed towards the Daemon King's territory."

"....."

Again, what did you do this time, elder sister.....

Cruel things with fire magic... it would be awkward if I don't cast 【Recovery】 on those still in the hospital.

But, to think, [Tempura] is in this world, huh..... I thought that they were things like fritters, but there's just something magical about it having the same name.

Tempura..... why did you shout out the name of the dish?

While I thought about that, Elmer poured the fruit wine into my glass personally, with an implicating smile appeared on his face.

"Those criminals... the magician girl said something interesting."

"Well, what was it?"

Finally, Elmer-san stopped talking about that Hero. He said the magic-user, so that's definitely my elder sisters.

"The rumor that Princess Yurushia of Taterudo, was an evil being that had sold her soul to the Daemons."

"Heeehhh....."

Did she notice anything...? I hope that it's just slander, but if she noticed, then it's about time for me to [Harvest] her.

"Did you know that, Lucia-san?"

"Know what?"

"Princess Yurushia seems to be beautiful princess with golden hair, called the Golden Princess."

"I see..."

At those words, the aristocrat's smile that I had stuck to my face, deepened in pleasure.

This person noticed..... I wonder how many people behind the scenes here know.

The facial expressions dropped from Noa and Nia, and at the same time, the [Presence] and [Killing Intent] that I had been suppressing began to run off me like a lava wave.

My Killing Intent has neither hostility nor malice. It's a Demon's [Intent] that planted pure [Terror] into the people in the building.

"W-wait a moment, Yu-..... rushia-sama..."

Elmer-san immediately threw on his nobleman's smile and stood up, kneeling before me at my seat.

"What are you going to do...?"

"Please forgive me. I am not your adversary. I only meant to convey to you that a hostile fool was lurking about..... and I, felt a little bit mischievous."

As he paled, Elmer-san looked at me seriously.

".....Well, it'll be alright."

If he had been a few seconds slower with his apology, Noa and Nia might have already begun the slaughter.

If it was Tina, she'd be filling the blood oceans by now, and if it was Fannie, the soul collection might have already ended.

As I retracted my Killing Intent, Elmer-san breathed out in relief while wiping away his sweat.

"Still... as expected of the legendary [Saint of the Holy Kingdom]. I'd heard rumors, but that was....."

Ah, as expected it was resolved simply with [As expected of the Holy Saint-sama].

It's strange..... the only one who had realized it was my elder sister-sama.

"Elmer-san, please, stand. It's strange if you keep kneeling to a simple traveler."

The other people who didn't know the circumstances were all tilting their

heads in puzzlement, drinking to warm themselves back up, or making an uproar.

It's not like letting out my Killing Intent is my favorite pastime It's true, you know? The rats that had run off in terror had all been caught by Noa by now.

Well, it was actually the attendants that had thought of the whole thing.

Now that we'd smoked them all out I changed my thoughts back to normal, I didn't want my true nature to be exposed.

"No, I have been impolite. From here on, my mercenary group shall become your eyes and hands and feet. I, without fail, shall pledge my loyalty to the beautiful Princess."

As Elmer-san said that, he touched his lips to the back of my hand.

Another worshipper has appeared.....

I wonder if this *delicious* fruit wine is also an [Offering].

But this Elmer-san, although I like him quite a bit, my heart didn't start thumping like when Noel kissed my hand.

Even if I looked at him closely, he didn't make me afraid of his gaze as much as Rick did.

.....Why was that?

After becoming a Demon, human beings feel just like other animals.

I love Father-sama and Mother-sama who gave my soul a name, and I worried about getting along with other human beings, but I thought this was because of the [Me] that was in the Dream World.

I left the simple tavern to Noa and Nia, and strolled out into the city alone at night.

My footsteps naturally became faster.

I was going somewhere without permission.

".....I want to see you..."

The moment I entered a deserted back alley..... I took off my traveler's clothes, and flew off into the night sky of the city as the 【Golden Beast】.

*

Nyaa.....

"...Eh, a cat?"

Noel, who was swinging his sword alone in the field, stopped as the cat appeared suddenly.

A very beautiful, golden-haired cat.

Reminding him of the girl that had a similar color, Noel smiled involuntarily.

"Hmm... come here."

Sheathing his sword and squatting down, although the golden cat seemed to hesitate at Noel's outstretched hand, it approached.

"Uwaa... how cute."

Instinctively remarking out loudly at the elegance of the cat, the cat's eyes suddenly widened and it backed off a step.

"S-sorry, did I scare you...? I wonder what I did....."

Although he didn't intend to feed it, when he took out the dried seafood as a substitute for snacks, that cat licked the finger of the right hand that he'd presented to it.

".....How friendly. Are you someone's pet? There's a ribbon on you."

The golden cat put both of its front legs on Noel's knee and gazed at the boy with bright red eyes.

"Where is your owner? Did you get lost?"

While he gently stroked its chin, the cat narrowed its eyes in comfort, and at that state Noel stretched out his arms timidly, and softly lifted the cat up.

"Where are you from... you look familiar."

As he closed his eyes, he thought of that beautiful golden-haired girl.

One that he'd admired since his childhood, and was aware that she was an

important person, a girl that he wanted to stand by.

Although she crawled into people hearts as soon as she arrived, if one reached out to her, she would escape and get away from them like a cat.

He wanted her to be happier than anyone else. But he didn't want to hand her to anyone.

Did his feelings reach her...? He wondered if she would realize them someday.

When the cat licked the cheeks of the boy who seemed a little lonely, Noel smiled with joy and rubbed his cheeks on the cat.

"You're kind... If you don't know how to get home, will you sleep in my bed?"

Thinking that the cat wouldn't understand him, when he touched his nose to the cat's, the cat was suddenly surprised and slipped through Noel's hands, and took several steps back.

"Ah..."

While suffering more damage than he'd thought as the warmth was lost from his hands and the feeling of loss set in, Noel smiled at the cat.

"Do you have a place to go home to...?"

The golden cat quietly looked at Noel who said this to it.....

And with a *nyaa*, it disappeared into the darkness.

Nyaa.....

"....."

Roderick, who was reading a book by the light of the fireplace in the guest room of the local lord's residence, noticed a cat coming in from an opened window.

He gazed at the cat silently, but given that his eyes went a little bit wide, he might have been somewhat surprised, too.

It was a beautiful cat with a coat that reminded him of someone.

The moment that he met eyes with the cat, he wondered if that girl had appeared in front of him.

Remembering that wild, unnatural girl, Roderick's mouth molded into a faint smile, and then silently tapped his knees with a *tap-tap*.

"Come over here."

From that silent, commanding appeal, the cat pulled back for an instant, then descended from the window, putting its front legs on his knees.

"....."

Pon-Pon... it also tapped on Roderick's knees.

The golden cat leaked out a sigh like a human, got on his knees obediently, rolled over, and lay down.

He was speechless. He didn't pamper it, either.

For some reason, in front of that slowly-weakening fire of the fireplace, a boy and a cat curled up together in gentle warmth.

It seemed, at least, that he could only be gentle when someone was by his side.

In the beginning, he had only gone to see a younger child that had become his relative.

He didn't have any interest in her, thinking that she would turn a curious eye to him like children of the same age, or be frightened.

He ended up meeting a beautiful girl that looked like a doll that first time, who wasn't frightened by Roderick, who touched him like he was any other child, and covered him with a clumsy flower garland.

Her appearance was cold like a [Doll], but on the inside was an outrageous girl.

For the first time outside of his family, he spoke with someone as an equal. Only that young girl stood next to him meeting his gaze.

That flower garland from his memory was still hanging up as a decoration in Roderick's room.

Roderick gently stroked the back of the cat that curled into a ball on his knees.

Was this awfully docile cat being kept by someone in this house? While his

hands stroked her back, the cat twisted its body in ticklishness, and looked up at Roderick with red eyes like rubies.

“.....”

He didn't say anything. The cat didn't purr.

When he put his finger close to the nose of the cat that watched him quietly, the golden cat play-bit down on his fingertip a little strongly, and leaped off of Roderick's knee.

“.....ah”

At Roderick that leaked out a voice for the first time, the cat, gave a *nyaa...* and leaped out of the open window.

Roderick, who had stiffened with his hands outstretched, looked at his hands that still held the warmth of the cat, and sensing a certain meaning, gave a big sigh.

“.....I wanted to get to know you.....”

Chapter 7: I turned 11 years old, Part 1

Deep in the basement of the Daemon King's Castle 【He】 was having a light dream.

He wasn't asleep. 【He】 doesn't know what sleep is.

Lying on top of the massive magic formation that had already lost its light, he closed his eyes and tried to recover the magic power that he'd lost.

A small distance away, several hundred of the people called [Daemons], were pouring their magic power into 【Him】 with faces that looked like they were about to die.

If they were killed, and their souls devoured, he knew that he could gain some magic power.

But 【He】 didn't do so.

From his thousands of years of experience, he knew that mere diluted souls wouldn't help recover much.

It was worthless unless it was a soul that was filled with fear which fell into madness and depravity.

It was better that he bound them with fear and had them supply him with magic power.

Also, if he killed every living creature within his sight, he might be able to 【Manifest】 in this world with their bodies and souls.

But 【He】 did not.

Although he had been defeated once, 【His】 pride did not allow him to go seriously against her.

There was anger. But there was no resentment.

Even the anger almost faded when he kept his eyes closed like that.

He recalled the 【Girl】.

Every day that 【She】 spent in the Demon World.....

At first she was tiny, and with her knowledge she was clearly a foolish existence.

Because he thought that her existence was interesting, he decided to keep her until he got bored, but 【She】 was different from anyone else 【He】 had met thus far.

Quite like a human being..... While 【He】 had more knowledge and intelligence than humans, he'd only done and said foolish things.

That weak existence wasn't afraid of 【Him】, and buried its face in his fur, and it was very strong, its power easily rising to match his with only a little help.

Before he knew it, it had become normal for 【Her】 to stay be his side. It was like the thousands of years of loneliness was a lie, and it reached the point where he preferred 【Her】 gentle, laid-back atmosphere.

He knew that 【She】 loved the material world.

Thinking that 【She】 would someday forsake the Demon world to go to that place, 【He】 , for the first time in his existence, was embarrassed about the [Feelings] that he couldn't identify.

So he bound her. In order to keep 【Her】 from going away. He bound her with fear, bound her with power, gave her a toy (pet), and bound her with feelings.

But 【She】 still went away..... To the human world.

Angry, 【He】 rampaged across the Demon World.

Just with a roar, he would send weaker demons scrambling to hide, and with several 【Arch Demons】 , 【He】 challenged one of the pillars, a 【Demon Duke】 , killing and eating him. Even the six remaining pillar 【Demon Dukes (Demon Lords)】 all avoided fighting with 【Him】 , and nobody dared to stay around 【Him】 .

There was no resentment.

Only a burning anger that continued to burn 【Him】 from the inside.

What kind of anger was this...? Just [Who] was it directed at?

Before he even knew or realized why he had become angry, he felt a mighty

magic power that distorted the dimensions.

Actually, the space was really being distorted. Feeling a nostalgic [Magic Power] leaking from that, 【He】 used his own magical power to wrench open the dimension, and 【He】 headed towards the material world..... only to be rejected by 【Her】.

He didn't give up.

If she wouldn't return to him, he would kill and eat her himself just to reclaim her.

And then... 【He】 woke from his dream.

It was slightly sweet..... that drunken feeling of that nostalgic magic power.....

* * *

There was no day or night in the Daemon King's Territory. Although it's merely a metaphor, the Daemon King's Territory was in fact thick with clouds due to the miasma and malice caused by the rotting meat of those who had been cruelly killed, the sun didn't shine even at midday.

There were many nocturnal Daemons among those with strong monster blood, it was possible to move in the night or the day, so naturally whether it was daytime or night time didn't matter.

In the country of the Daemon King... Gitez, everyone who could fight had already headed out in the [Daemon King's Army], and all those that remained, were the [Weak] that couldn't fight.

The sick, the young, the elderly, and the disabled all had their food taken away by the rest, and were given no choice but to die.

But the Daemons didn't give up.

They refused to accept their fate and die docilely, and the weak aimed for the even weaker, struggling desperately and taking everything to survive.

[.....]

Those that were afraid, held their breath and hid.

In a devastated, filth-covered city, a single [Human] [Girl] was lightly strolling.

She wore a well-tailored dress of black and silver, and had smooth, white skin, and golden hair that let out a faint glow.

With a beauty that could charm anyone, even the Daemons who didn't believe in gods thought that she was an angel.

Although the strong had disappeared, if a human girl walked around this horrible Daemon city, she would have been reaped and ended before she even took a few steps.

However, nobody stopped the girl. No one even made eye contact.

It had been a few hours since this girl showed up in the town.

And the Daemons thought of the horrible brutalities that that girl had committed in that short time.

[The Black Demon is here!]

The girl didn't show a single change in expression when she saw this ruined town.

She just loosened her cheeks with nostalgia, and walked lightly through the city.

"O, Oi, Human! Hand over the food!"

The children were not as sensitive to danger as the adults.

They misled themselves into thinking that that [Fear] that they felt instinctively was because of them seeing a human for the first time.

Still, they were young children.

Approximately 5 to 8 years old, the young Daemons looked no different from a human.

"....."

The girl stopped her feet, and turned her pale gold eyes to face the five children who called out to her.

"Y... You heard me! Hand over the food!"

While feeling the pressure from that glance, the oldest boy held out a rusty

knife, and shouted his demands to the girl again.....

[.....,]

As the girl smiled like a Demon, the children screamed out noiselessly.

The adult Daemons who were observing while hiding behind cover, gave the children a look of pity.

But, it was hopeless. They couldn't do a thing.

And so.....

The girl threw the [Black Thing] that she held in her hand against the Daemon youth's face at a terrifying speed.

"...!?"

The children didn't understand what had happened.

The girl that their boss had caught, had thrust some black thing into his mouth.

"...S-stop, *moga*"

The puzzled, terrified-looking boy was violently pinned down, as the girl tore out more dried seafood with a grinding sound and thrust it into the boy's mouth.

Even as he cried out or shouted, she did not stop.

It might perhaps be called kindness that dried seaweed was thrust in alternately with the seafood.

As the youth's stomach began to swell out after a few minutes as the seafood products were thrust into him, he was crying and curling up like a maiden who'd been defiled.

However, the horror wasn't over.

As the time passed, the dried food in his stomach began to swell, and then the true fear began.

The girl nodded with a satisfied face, and then turned to face the remaining frightened children with a smile.

Their horror was not yet over.....

Several minutes later..... After the satisfied girl left, the Daemon adults rushed over to rescue the children whose stomachs had were swollen and filled to the point of bursting, buried under all the dried, [Black] seafood.

Forcing others to eat, it was as if that evil girl was a Demon like the shape of the dried goods she forced them to eat.

As the girl walked off towards the [Daemon King's Castle], they murmured with horrified faces, even as they collected the remaining seafood products.

“.....The Black (food that she forced others to eat) Demon...”..... and so on.

Chapter 8: I turned 11 years old, Part 2

“.....What do you mean?”

The old Daemon mage-Royal Magician Geas-murmured with a hoarse voice, staring at the Forest of Demons While floating in the air with air magic.

Several months have passed since the [Black Princess Killian]’s army, which had proceeded ahead of the main troops, had disappeared.

Before them, there was an issue with the various chieftains and their troops going missing. Since the Daemons couldn’t command them because of their wills, they changed their course halfway and went on to attack the human towns, but encountered the human armies along the way and got annihilated, so that had been predicted somewhat.

When they lost contact with Killian, Geas thought that since it was that cunning woman who plotted against the Daemon King and tried to propagate the mood of rebellion, she would have hit another human nation by herself.

Black Princess Killian’s army numbered around 700,000.

With their forced-march advance, even those wild ones would have surely headed out for a sortie, but with so many troops there would definitely still be traces of their passage in the forest. Geas sent a few subordinates down Killian’s trail, secretly intending to come in contact with her.

However, the signs abruptly disappeared, and there weren’t any signs of damage to the human nations either, so said the report by his subordinates that participated in the search.

After Geas thoroughly searched the place he was led to, he finally found traces of battle in the forest near where the tracks disappeared.

He hadn’t noticed since they were too unnatural.

He might not even have noticed at all had he not found [Stone Statues] scattered around in that place.

For a battle involving 250,000 troops, the traces of battle were far too

localized, as if a small force had trampled them one-sidedly. But that couldn't be.

The most unnatural thing of all, was that there was no trace of the bodies anywhere.

Were Killian's Daemons all turned into food for the monsters? But then, he didn't know why Killian's forces had disappeared.

To begin with, he couldn't imagine a force of 250,000 losing.

In comparison, even if the hero and the saint were together, it would have been impossible to defeat a combined force of 250,000 Daemons and magic beasts.

".....Damn, it was a precious chance,"

Geas slipped into the words of his previous life, unlike the elderly manner he'd always adopted.

For decades..... no, ever since he had been born into this world over a hundred years ago, he had looked forward to that opportunity, and it was supposed to have come into his hands.

Although he was hindered by the 【Demon Beast】 that appeared at its own convenience, he still held on to his last hope, but even after he had planned for the entirety of the Daemon King's Army to take the field.....

"...muu"

Geas noticed someone flying towards him.

Even in the Daemon King's Army, only the Daemons who had devil bird blood could fly, so the person who was approaching Geas and using 【Concealment】, that would have learned the 【Flying Magic】 created by Geas, could only be his disciple.

"...Did you find anything?"

What appeared was a dark-skinned Daemon youth.

His magic power was comparatively bigger than that of the other disciples, but because he'd been flying daily, the youth's glossy skin seemed to have lost

its color.

“Geas-sama....., in the woods to the west... armed humans... I found some”

“.....Really?”

Maybe it was his exhaustion, but the youth reported as if he was out of breath and Geas didn't thank the youth, instead pausing slightly as he gave a curt reply.

“The forest in the west...? You should go and rest...”

“No... I am fine”

Geas stared at the youth who tried to get behind him as the youth shook his head at his master's orders...

“When I told you to [Rest]... [Blazing Arrow]...”

“...!?”

Geas released the fire magic with a single chant, and the Daemon youth caught the blow that would normally have downed him in a single hit, as his face distorted into that of a beast.

“As expected, you have been possessed!”

As Geas shouted out while flying downwards, the burning Daemon youth pursued at a terrifying speed, despite him being on fire.

“You even forgot the magic that I taught! [Magic power that governs all creation, devour mine enemy!]”

Geas invoked the magic, and the [Jaws] that were born of magic power kept the Daemon youth at bay for a moment as it bit at him.

What had happened to the Daemon youth...?

Without even the time to think about it, Geas saw a shadow with bat wings over where the Daemon youth disappeared.

He probably didn't see it truly and only saw the appearance on the surface.

A beautiful girl with bat wings, floating in the sky.

“...Who are you?”

At Geas' question, the silver-haired girl wearing a purple dress smiled bewitchingly and replied in a melodious voice.

"I came to play."

"...Wha"

In the next moment, Geas had already been cut down from behind.

If the blow had pierced the defensive magic, he would have received a fatal injury in that instant he failed to dodge.

When had she gotten behind him? No, *since when* did he think that that girl was *in front of* him?

Geas looked at the girl who was licking the blood off her long, black claw.

"Vampire?!"

A legendary monster that weren't accepted in the Daemon King's Army.....
【Vampire】.

The vampires that thirsted for blood, and would treat their comrades as [Food] were unacceptable existences even in the Daemon King's territory.

Besides, that overwhelming feeling... that ominous presence... that beauty..... Considering the power that she showed just now, she was clearly a [Greater Vampire] that was past a certain age.

Geas feared that all of his disciples had already had their blood sucked dry.

There were still several hours before the morning would come and the power of a vampire would wane.

".....tch"

Geas clicked his tongue and resolved himself.

Why, though, in this sort of place, had a [Greater Vampire] that had the power to suppress even the Daemon King appeared? Was the disappearance of the Daemon King's Army because she ate them all?

But no, no matter how ancient the vampire, it shouldn't have been possible to fight Killian without injury.

As an existence that could truly be called the [King of Monsters], it was unthinkable that she would join forces with the humans.

What was he missing...?

Had he been laboring under a serious [Misunderstanding]?

“.....”

Nevertheless Geas wasn't going to die in such a place. Even if he had to release all of the magic power that he'd hoarded away for the fulfilment of his desire, he would survive.

*

Millaine, who used the [Paid Leave] she had received, had come for a [Vacation] near the Daemon King's territory.

Freed from her friend and employer's (Demon's) unreasonable everyday demands, finally being able to stretch her (literal) wings after a long time, the number of Daemons that she and her subordinates had eaten reached into the tens of thousands.

In addition to choosing those who looked like they would be good at their [Business] into their fold, she also took those that looked and tasted good as souvenirs for her friend, and enjoyed herself at her leisure.

“Certainly, that child did come in this direction, didn't she? I wonder if she secretly went in...”

The originally overly-serious character of the vampire, in spite of all the clawing and turning around, was still thinking about such a thing.

While all the vampire maids were going [How pitiful...] about their master, and secretly wiping away their tears with a handkerchief, well, it doesn't matter, but there was the appearance of a new Daemon youth as a butler apprentice, and Millaine who was his teacher was also the leader of the Daemons, and only a small number of subordinates had come here to report.

“fu~hn...”

Previously, she wasn't interested in old people, but according to her friend it's the old people who constantly think of their issues that have a [Deep and

Matured Taste], it seems.

Millaine spread her black bat wings, and flew up into the starry sky.

Because it was only a few hours to dawn, there was danger, but considering that perhaps the followers of her friend might be hunting, she couldn't stay still.

Flying into the sky at a speed that left her maids and butlers behind, the Daemons that she met along the way weren't turned into vampires, but they weren't [Good-for-nothing], and rather were helpful in searching for that old man.

The blood of the old man on her claws was a little tart, but had deep flavor.

If she [Played] with him a little more it might become even more tasty, but the old man suddenly released a strong wave of magic power, and for the first time, began to chant a spell.

"...O-oh? It might be a bit dangerous.....?"

That magic power ... that killing intent..... although she didn't understand what he was chanting, Millaine could tell that it was a powerful spell, to the extent that it might threaten her existence.

Running was not a good plan. Because she didn't know its range, she might be defenseless if she turned her back and ran.

To begin with, vampires had such high offensive strength and recovery ability that they seemed invulnerable, but their defensive abilities weren't a big deal.

"[Nuclear Meltdown]...!"

The trump card [Super Magic] that only the Daemon King and Geas could use expanded with a speed and range that far exceeded the estimate of Millaine, who'd taken a stance to dodge.

"Crap!"

Millaine, who immediately realized its power, gave up dodging it and wrapped her body with magic-infused feathers, preparing to take the hit.

Feeling an unimaginably huge heat and light rush at her as Millaine shut her eyes tightly.....

“【Nya~】”

“Millaine-sama, I have something I’d like to ask you~”

“.....Hah?”

When Millaine opened her eyes at that carefree and out-of-place voice, the heat and light had disappeared as if they had never been there at all, and she saw the figure of Nia wielding a golden magic sword (Nyan Blade) that crackled with electricity.

“Millaine-sama, are you listening~?”

“Eh..... ah..., I heard you.”

Although she recognized Nia’s appearance, but Millaine looked at Nia again.

She’d heard that the girl had the ability of 【Absorption】, but was all that magic really absorbed.....?

At Millaine who was stunned at seeing the power of an Arch demon again, Nia furrowed her eyebrows with a troubled face.

“Hey~... Millaine-sama?”

“Wh-what?”

“That grandpa from just now, he seems to have escaped.”

“.....EHh!?”

After pausing for a second, Millaine, who finally understood what was being said, turned to look, but the figure of that old man was already gone.

“Nia, where did that old man go!?”

“Unn, well... that way.”

As Nia pointed towards the north, Millaine tracked the finger with her eyes, and looked up to stare into the distance.

“The Daemon King’s Territory.....”

Even Millaine, who was called a [Greater Vampire], didn’t have the temper to chase him all the way into the Daemon’s main camp.....

“Hey, Nia..... Will you help me search for that person from just now...?”

As Millaine tried asking with upturned eyes, Nia clapped her hands as if she'd hit upon something.

"Right, right, Millaine-sama, Yurushia-sama didn't come back last night, and seems to have gone somewhere, might you know where she's gone?"

".....HaaaaAAAAAAA!?"

Chapter 9: I turned 11 years old, Part 3

“Yurushia-sama has gone missing!”

When morning came, the maid who came to take care of Yurushia reported such to Vio, who was in charge.

“Where is the Princess!?”

“Where are the Saint-sama’s attendants?”

“We have not seen them”

As they searched for the [Saint] and the [Princess] who had suddenly disappeared, all of the staff went into a panic and couldn’t conceal their unease.

Today was Yurushia’s 11th birthday, and the faces of the maids, who had used the kitchen of the inn to bake a cake, sunk in worry.

Although she acted like an adult, she was only 11: the youngest in the whole group.

However, nobody thought that she had run away.

It was Yurushia’s desire to come here in the first place, and even as they were fighting monsters along the journey, she was the calmest.

In contrast, the knights and soldiers realized how they needed the [greatness of her being] that came from the [Saint].

Healing all their injuries in an instant, and since most of the monsters couldn’t break through her [Protection], they felt like they were standing naked in the battlefield without the [Saint-sama].

“Everyone, calm down”

Roderick... the [Grandchild of the King] and the [Holy Paladin], calmed everyone down with his rebuke.

“Yurushia’s most likely destination... is probably the Daemon King’s territory.”

At those words, heartbroken noises leaked out of the knights and maids.

A little girl that was not yet 11, who wished for the peace of the world, had

understood, and chosen to confront the Daemon King alone as the Holy Saint for the sake of those that were grieving.

“Noel and I will head for the Daemon King’s territory. I will not ask you all to follow us. You will not be punished even if you do not come along, so do not worry. Let’s go, Noel!”

“Yes, Your Highness”

He made eye contact with Noel who was by his side, and they nodded to each other.

As for Noel and Rick, they knew that Yurushia was concerned about the **【Demon Beast】**.

There was a terrifying **【Demon Beast】** that was aiming for her.....

The two of them thought that she went by herself since she might have harmed the two of them who were close to her if they had gone together.

Also..... those strange events last night. Perhaps it was that the [Cat] came to tell them about the girl’s *pure heart* before she left.

The next day, Rick and Noel finished their preparations and departed for the Daemon King’s territory.

The knights and soldiers that followed them of their own volition, joined midway by several hundred mercenaries including the [Hawkeye Mercenary Company], came to number around the scale of about 500 people.

* * *

“Nnn~~~...”

Walking as I was in a town of the Daemons, I was fully enjoying my first time by myself in a long while.

How long had it been since I had walked outside by myself? Uhhh, ehh?

Even if I read through all of my memories as Yurushia, I couldn’t find a single time where I had been alone other than inside of the mansion.....

“.....Ever since I met **【Him】**”

How long have I been pampered?!

When I entered the town in the Daemon King's territory, I didn't want to stand out so I walked, but there wasn't anything particularly interesting.

Most of the stores weren't open. The only ones that were had been looted.

The town was completely dead..... I suppressed my presence, although it brought about a vulnerable atmosphere, however, after the first few attacked there haven't been any more of them.

Everyone was thin and emancipated, so I had instinctively fed them with the dried octopus and squid, but I wonder if they liked it?

I thought about the balance of nutrients properly, so I let them eat the seaweed together too.

..... This dress can really store a whole lot of dried food.

I think, this might be the only piece of equipment in the world that is cursed with seafood products...

While I was thinking such things, I arrived at the Daemon King's Castle.

..... This is the Daemon King's Castle, huh? It's got an old and eerie atmosphere, but I didn't feel a single bit of presence.

I wonder if Daemon King-san is out...?

It seems a bit insecure to not even have a guard. I wonder if that self-styled Hero person is opening treasure boxes and stuff without permission somewhere.

.....ah, there's someone.

A big person stood alone at the gate of the Daemon King's castle.

Big..... I wonder, he must be close to 3 meters tall. He's a muscly strongman.

"Uho, uho, uho, (Welcome, foolish human. As long as I live, then it is impossible for this gate to open)"

..... ha?

Oh no..... I wonder if the automatic translation function of the 【Spirit Language】 has gone wrong somewhere.....

"Uhoho, Uho! (Why are you silent? I see you're a thin human girl.....Hey, why does everyone ignore Francois, the Iron Princess of the dwarves)"

"Dwarf!?"

Finally, they appeared.....

Furthermore, it's everyone's long awaited [Princess-sama], yo!

"Uhoo, uhuhouhoho (Is this your first time seeing a dwarf? But, you understand the dwarf language, I will praise you, human.)"

Amazing, Mochipurun. (remember that old, old chapter with ridiculous names?) Even though that Salt Daifuku (read: Elf) looked so decent.....

"Uhoho—, Uhohoho (Then, I will reintroduce myself again in light of that. I am the iron Princess Francois. I am the woman that will be Daemon King Hebrad-sama's wife.)"

"o-Ooh..."

Still, looking at this Daemon King..... his strike zone is infinite.

"S-sorry, I didn't think that there would be a Dwarf in the Daemon King's territory."

When I said so, Francois' boulder-like face turned a little downcast and lonely.

"Uho... uho, uho (I see..... Seven years ago, when I was four years old, since my sisters were jealous of my beauty, they exiled me to this place)"

"The same age.....!"

This child is only 11 years old.....!?

"Uhoo? Uhoho, Uho—o (Well, is that so? Is your growth stunted? If you don't put on some meat, you won't be attractive to men, hohoho)"

But an ordinary Dwarf is about 2 meters tall, I hear.....

"Pardon the late introduction, I am Yurushia. ...and, uh, why is a queen-candidate like Francois in such a place?"

"Uuho—uhuhouhoo (Hebrad-sama went forth in order to destroy the humans. In his absence he left guarding Daemon King's castle to me.

Because I'm afraid that I'll get injured...)"

".....Is that so."

What a troublesome rose..... No, that's not it.

This girl has a very beautiful maiden's heart! Daemon King-san, should also understand.

I gently touch Francois' basketball-sized fist.

"Francois..... because you're a lovely child, the Daemon King-sama didn't want to do anything that might have hurt you..."

"uhoh... (Yurushia...)"

Thud...

The girl who probably weighed 300 kilograms knelt down, and put her eyes at my height.

"Uhoo, uhoho, uho... (Thank you... that... Will you be my friend...? I don't have... any friends of the same age)"

"Yes, I wish for that too. Nice to meet you, Fran."

"Uho—, uho, uho (Nice to meet you, Yuru..... Hey... Yuru's dress, is very wonderful...)"

When Francois saw my dress, she wiggled bashfully, and fumbled with her hair.

..... that... it was curly hair. I had thought that it was a helmet made of black iron.

"Do you like this...?"

"Uhoo, uhouho, uhoho (Yes... but it's impossible. If I tried to wear it, it would surely tear immediately...)"

"This was made by my attendants. It's really durable, so I'll ask them to make one for you, Fran."

"Uho—o, uhouhoho, uhoo! (Really!? I, I'm sorry, that was immodest of me. But, I'm very glad. If it's Yuru, I'll let you into the Daemon King's castle. Because,

you're a friend, and that's special!"

"Waa, thank you, Fran"

And in this way, I was able to enter the Daemon King's castle without issue.

Because there isn't much food left in the castle to speak of, I gave a lot of dried goods to Francois for food in passing, in order for her to feed the elephants that she kept in the castle garden, and she ran off like a storm.

..... With this, she'll be in no danger.

And then..... I walked alone into the Daemon King's castle.

It transmitted..... my warmth.

Just as I felt it, 【He】 has certainly noticed.

A slightly sweet and nostalgic feeling that tickled the nose.....

With each step that I took down the stair into the basement, the 【Smell】 became stronger.

The other side..... of this door.

"..... At last,"

The two of us met.

Chapter 10: The Demon Verse, Part 1

Before my eyes are large metal doors.

It's like the gate before the last boss in a game: a double-door with many reliefs carved into it.

"Tei~"

Maybe it was sealed with magic, but when I flicked my fingers, I heard a static-electricity-like snap, and the door slowly collapsed towards the other side.

"....."

The space ahead stretched out into an enormous underground space.

To both the left and right were carved stairs that led downwards..... Several hundred meters down that stairway, an enormously large magic formation could be seen.

And on top of that magic formation.....

katsun...katsun... the sound of my black low-heeled shoes echoed on the carved-rock stairway.

Don't panic... I walked slowly. There is no need to panic. There is nobody who could interfere with us now in this place.

As I went down the stairs, the magic formation came into my line of sight.

"[.....]"

On top of the magic formation, the night-like 【Dark Beast】raised his body and stared at me in silence.

katsun.....

I descended down the last step of the stairway, and then gently 【Smiled】 at him.

"Has your body recovered...?"

As my voice echoed in that lifeless space, 【His】 silver eyes narrowed a little.

“[.....The physical body matters not to a Demon. Did you forget even such a thing...?]”

“Well.....”

I stepped forward again, and stepped into the magic formation.

“Since it’s been a long time, I forgot.”

When I smiled at him sweetly, 【He】 bore his teeth slightly.

Are you smiling? Or are you angry..... probably both. If I understand 【His】 expressions correctly, it’s about me?

Around him are some clothes that look like they’re from Daemons, scattered about as if the people wearing them had just disappeared.

They were eaten..... I noticed as I approached that all the souls of everyone that were in this underground space were eaten.

Even though Daemon’s souls weren’t very nice to eat at all.....

As expected we’re serious.

“[I will make you mine.]”

【He】 flatly spoke out about his [Wish].

“.....Yes”

I don’t reject 【His】 wish. I don’t reject the Demon’s wish.

When I heard his desire expressed so directly, my chest felt warm.

“I-I’ll do as I like”

I looked directly into 【His】 eyes, and spoke of my own [wish].

【His】 wish is to make me his and to take me back to the Demon World.

[My] wish is to live freely in the human world.

Both are equally selfish wishes, and neither of us want to find a compromise.

Why...?

“The whims of my fellow Demon... that’s certainly something I don’t get.....”

The whites of my eyes slowly corroded to [Black], and my pupils were dyed

crimson like the color of blood.

Crimson fangs and claws pushed out, and a set of golden bat wings spread out from behind me.

Along with that, my low heels responded by turning into sharp stilettos, and my knee-length dress stretched downwards to cover my feet in order to raise my defensive power.

“[Even if I have to kill and eat you, I will make you return..... Yurushia...]”

As I turned into a human-shaped Demon, the 【Words】that 【He】spoke in the spirit language became a pressure that assaulted me. I took it on directly from the front.

“If you win: tear me up, tear my head off, and make me return with you to the Demon World. But... if I win, then you must accept my *love*”

Starting from that word, [Magic] and [Miasma] began to gush out and spill from the two of us, and at the same time the huge underground space shook and was corrupted into the 【Demon World】.

“Well, let’s begin.”

The foolish struggle of obstinacy between demon companions.

At that time... the expression on my face was for the first time, I think, the most devilishly bright smile I had ever had.

* * *

“u-ho!? (Wh-what was that!?)”

The [Earthquake]’s shockwave spread out, with the Daemon King’s Castle as its epicenter, and stirred up the entirety of the Daemon King’s territory.

Just a few seconds..... she thought it couldn’t be an earthquake. The shock that felt like being struck, which passed her and all of the living creatures in the Daemon King’s territory caused them to shiver in revulsion.

If they were humans, perhaps they might have locked themselves indoors and hoped for rescue from [God]. However, the Daemons who were forsaken by the gods went out and instinctively turned to face the Daemon King’s Castle.

The Iron Princess Francois too, holding hands with her beloved war elephants in the garden of the Daemon King's Castle felt fear of that repulsive presence, but thinking of that [Weak] girl that had become her new friend, she hesitated to run away.

Francois... rather all of the Daemons who lived around the Daemon King Castle, they saw terrifying things.

The ground broke apart with a thunderous roar, and the upper portion of the Daemon King's Castle was blown away. As a hole was drilled into the [Clouds of Malice] that the sun never shined through, two pillars, one [Jet Black] the other [Gold], pierced the sky.

* * *

".....This is..."

Daemon King Hebrad raised his head to look toward the repulsive presence he felt in the distance.

Hebrad had been stalled within this Forest of Demons for several months

Black Princess Killian had gone missing. The force that went to search for them didn't return, either, and from Geas, who had returned from that [Greater Vampire], he heard that there might be [enemies] that were beyond even that, so it became impossible to move the army around carelessly.

However, if they stagnated any further the morale of the army would be lost.

Unless they promptly invaded the Human nations and prepared an army that could take down that unchained 【Demon Beast】, it would evolve into a crisis for the world itself, not just of the Daemons.

Hebrad mocked his own stupidity that he, who was trying to avenge himself on humans, was trying to save the world.

Where did he go wrong.....?

Was it in claiming the humans' magic power? Was it his summoning scheme? He had a relatively decent understanding of the pillar called the 【Demon Lord】, so why was he unable to summon it?

Did the 【Demon Beast】 substitute for the 【Demon Lord】 and force its way

into materializing?

Was there something *suspicious* that he had overlooked.....?

Hebrad, who was feeling anxious, suddenly felt a repulsive presence in the far distance.

“...Shit.”

Hebrad spat a little as he began the incantation of the 【Flying】 spell.

He felt it from the center of the Daemon King’s territory. Perhaps the 【Demon Beast】 had awoken and begun to move.

By Hebrad’s estimates, it should still have been six months away.....

“Where are you going, Hebrad!”

Throwing away the mask of being a subordinate, Geas called out Hebrad by his first name in panic.

“Geas, did you not feel that!?”

“I know that! But, what are you saying by returning to that land that you abandoned!”

The Daemon King, for the sake of keeping the Daemon race alive, had abandoned the Daemon King’s territory.

But... Hebrad had still left a single hope in that place.

He had reformed the territory. Most of the reforms had failed, but they had taken root in some of the villages, and the productivity had been increased.

And..... there was that Dwarf girl that he had picked up several years ago: a girl who was a born hero that had hence been ostracized and banished. If that girl ever got the chance to wield power, she probably would have walked a different path in life.

Hebrad had imparted to her some of his [Knowledge]. If the Daemon King’s army were defeated by the humans and entirely annihilated, he had hoped that she would escape and lead the remaining Daemons.

“The land is beyond saving; give it up... besides, even if the 【Demon Beast】 rampaged, and ate the people of that land, he would not get souls. I couldn’t do

it in the Daemon King's Castle because he would notice, but I went all around the Daemon territory to apply that special magic."

Geas who was usually of few words, grinned broadly with a creepy smile.

"....."

Hebrad who was of the [Same Background] as Geas, knew the purpose for his actions. Still, Hebrad believed that even if Geas knew of his intentions, he would cooperate, but Hebrad finally noticed that even if Geas cooperated with him, he didn't consider the Daemons at all.

"...I am going"

"Hebrad!"

Floating up into the sky instantly, Geas could only call out towards Hebrad's back as he flew towards the Daemon territory.

Geas could also use 【Flight】, but he couldn't possibly catch up with the Daemon King, who had the greatest amount of magic power.

And if the 【Demon Beast】 had awakened, returning to the Daemon territory was suicide.

For he who was of the same background, even Geas had occasionally thought of him as a son, but Geas had thoughts of killing those feelings.

"I will make use of the Daemon King's army I have received..."

* * *

The daylight filled up the blue skies. A black cloud spread like the sea below.

I broke through the bedrock, and confronted 【Him】 as I sprang up above the clouds.

"[Radiant Bow]!"

"[GuaoOooooooooooooo!]"

The hundreds of golden arrows were intercepted by black lightning.

While it struck down all the golden arrows, the black thunder raged and began to shave off the protection of my [Radiant Shield].

But for me, it didn't mean that I was doing nothing.

"...[Come, darkness, where there was light]..."

I imagined a [Door of Darkness]... on the other side.

"[Open, Black Gate]"

At my **[words]**, a door to empty space opened. The air, the light, the darkness, the nothingness, and the black lightning was sucked into it as the **[Black Gate]** crumbled into nothingness.

Honestly speaking, that magic is dangerous.

I think it's part of the Spirit World, but if I kept forcing the spaces together, the whole country might have disappeared..... but my magic power would run out first.

I had to go to the extent of using such a magic because of the difference in power between **[Him]** and I.

I had prepared several trump cards.

That **[Black Magic]** I'd just used was one of them, but the biggest trump card could only be used once. Moreover, if I misjudged the timing, I would be in quite the pickle.

I had barely expected it, but it was more tiresome than I thought.

"**[Goooooooooooooo!]**"

[He] roared towards the sky, and summoned a black storm.

In this place where violent winds and lighting storms raged all the time, a middle-tier demon wouldn't even be able to exist.

Although I took only a little damage, it was starting to accumulate.

..... It seems he seriously doesn't intend to let me escape.

The reason why I wanted to settle things with **[Him]** via [battle] rather than words wasn't because I thought I could beat **[Him]**.

But, rather, even if there was a difference in power, I wanted him to think of me as an **[equal]**...

Otherwise, my 【words】 would never reach 【Him】.

As a result I had to use my final [Trump Card].....

To use my words.

“[Light, flap your wings]... [Shining Wings]!”

To compete with 【Him】, I could only use speed.

Light gathered on my bat wings, and turned into golden feathers like the wings of an angel.

I didn't choose to make the angel feathers on a whim.

..... It is completely not a whim and preference that they were angel feathers.

“[What!?]”

【He】 cried out. It seems to him that I disappeared.

These wings weren't for flapping. Using the knowledge I got from the dream world, I pushed out magic power from the feathers, and increased my speed temporarily.

Even I myself couldn't react fast enough for my speed, and I was hit by lightning, but I didn't care.

“[GuuaAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!]”

At the moment 【He】 released a wide-ranging black tornado,

“[Let there be Black Light]!”

I shot out a ray of 【Black Light】 in reaction to his roar, and blocked out 【His】 hearing and sight.

And in that same instant, I spread out my golden wings, and rushed towards 【Him】 beyond the limit of my speed.

In order to use... my final [Trump card].

Chapter 11: The Demon Verse, Part 2

Within the [Blackness] which nobody could see through, I spread my golden wings and broke through the black storm.

To 【His】 original position.....

To convey my feelings.

“[...]”

As I broke through the black light and storm, 【He】 bared his fangs at me.

【He】 was still wary of my power as a 【Devil】 .

【He】 was better than I was at close-quarters, but he chose to fight at long range, and I think that I approached him as a 【Devil】 in [Human Form] since I was confused and didn't know what to do.

I also wanted it. Not because people thought that the 【Devils】 were specialized in magic combat, but because I wanted to show him that I could stand up to 【Him】 with my own power.

Besides, I had other reasons for keeping my [Demon Beast (Cat)] mode in reserve.

“[!?]”

The instant 【He】 bared his fangs, I transformed into a cat.

I'm sorry... Showing 【Him】 that nostalgic figure of all the times we spent in the Demon World, his born fangs shook and hesitated for an instant.

And in that instant that I leapt into 【His】 reach, I turned back into my [Human Form], and softly wrapped his nose with both of my hands.

I took a breath. And stared straight into 【His】 eyes.

“.....I am yours... 【Rinne】”

I recalled the time we met.....

Commanding (Ri-ri) and Black (kuro)..... That is the name that I gave 【Him】.

“[!]”

As the shock of a name hit 【Him】..... Rinne stiffened.

The only one that could have 【Named】 him, was I, who was a [Human] with the magic power of a [Demon].

Naming a Demon was to mutually carve that name on each other's soul. A sharp, intense pain wracked my body as I 【Named】 Rinne.

But even then, it didn't mean that I fainted.

This, was the only opportunity that I would get to say it.

If I had an [Eternity] of time, I would give it all to Rinne.

.....Therefore,

“...Rinne... become mine”

At that moment, the black tempest and light faded away.

Slowly..... thousands of meters in the air, our power ran out, and we began to fall.

“[.....You’re ... really an outrageous one.Yurushia]”

Rinne, who went stiff longer than I expected, seemed to be astonished..... he leaked out a gentle voice. It's a little bit ticklish to call out your name.

“~~.....Sorry”

Going with the flow, it feels like I said some ridiculous things.

Again, my face felt awfully hot.....

“[It was absurd..... Why, did you return to a human form? If you had stayed in your Demon form, you would not have received such a huge shock...]”

“.....Yeah.”

Even now, my body hurt a lot. But.....

“I wanted Rinne to know..... I have the heart and the mind of a [Human]. I wanted you to know that both of them are ‘me’.”

Both of them were the real me. I can't choose between either.

..... Because, well, I've gotten accustomed to the body of a human, and it's somewhat convenient.

Rinne looked at me as I thought about such things, and gave a light sigh.

"[That is true. You are a 【Devil】... the Demon with the most freedom.]"

A Demon that was bound by no-one, Rinne said. But even then it's alright to be fettered once in a while, you know? I felt puzzled as things suddenly improved.

I didn't say anything as I might have gotten carried away.

But, what exactly was a 【Devil】.....? I sort of feel what it means, but..... it doesn't fit well.

"[...I am yours..... Yurushia.]"

It was a [Vow] that was engraved in the soul just like the 【Naming】.

"As I am yours as well..... Rinne."

Those words were engraved on my soul.

The sky became bright. The thick clouds cleared.

The clouds that were formed of miasma and resentment, were ripped apart in fear of us, and were absorbed entirely by us, disappearing.

* * *

The Daemon King's Base..... the people who had been left in [Gitez] that was directly under the control of the Daemon King, all stared up at the *sky*.

The black storm disappeared, and the clouds that were dyed black returned to their original colors, the warm sunlight falling like a pillar of light from the hole in the clouds that had opened up in the sky above the Daemon King's Castle.

The Daemons all witnessed it.

In that light, the figure of an 【Angel】 with golden wings was descending, accompanied by that huge black beast.

“.....”

The Daemons all stared in blank amazement at the 【Angel】.

When she descended below the clouds, the clouds that had blocked out the sun for thousands of years disappeared, as if they had been purified.

For the first time they saw the blue sky that stretched on forever.

A warm sunshine that brought with it endless blessings.

The Daemons that had been cast away to a forsaken land by humans, and who had cursed the [Gods] who didn't save them even as they prayed, lived.

Humans had also, in the name of the [Gods], turned a violent hand towards the Daemons, painting them as [Evil].

For the Daemons, the Gods were an [Enemy].

The gods didn't exist. The Daemons who believed so, witnessed an 【Angel】 on this day.

An old Daemon was silently shedding tears.

A Daemon child despite not being taught to by anyone, was kneeling reverently at the sky.

For the Daemons, on this day..... to who had given up their hope, the [God of the Daemons] descended.

“eh..... I...”

“[The Daemon God?]”

“[.....]”

Chapter 12: Becoming an Idol, Part 1

“...Wh-what, is that shaking now.....”

Alfio, feeling the slight tremors, raised his head.

They were in the treasure vault of the Daemon King’s Castle. The [Hero], that [Self-proclaimed Man of Valor] that had come this far had been defeated in battle, and was in the place where the Daemons kept weapons that couldn’t be used.

So, it might have been more accurate to say that it was a [Storeroom] rather than the treasure vault.

“Hey... Al. I wonder if we can use these weapons that the Daemons possess.....”

“.....eh?”

Staring at the gorgeous magic sword that had been adorned with a holy symbol, Swordswoman Cheria murmured to the Hero Alfio as he searched through the treasure box.

Alfio, who wasn’t expecting such a thing let out an undignified sound, but glossed over it fluently..... putting on a somewhat stiff smile spread across his face.

“It-it’s only natural that the Hero picks up new equipment in the hideout of the Daemon King. This is for the sake of the world.”

The hero of Shiguresu, Alfio, and his companions, who had been, just like the [Template], *preemptively attacked* by the mercenaries of Kolkopo before they turned the tables on them, had been protested about by the *cowardly* feudal lord, and had been chased by the military police all the way as they headed to the Daemon King’s territory to defeat the Daemon King.

They didn’t run into too much trouble on the way to the Daemon King’s Castle.

They had considered that they would encounter the Daemon King’s Army, but

such a thing never happened.

Even in the Daemon villages, as long as he showed a little bit of [Strength] without subjugating them, he was able to *receive* food, and even the rare encounters with the Daemon King's Army were of small units that had food and were easily defeated.

The trouble was the fact that the female brigade had been complaining about not having a place to stay in, because Alfio rejected every Daemon village.

Even as they proceeded towards the Daemon King's Capital, they did not encounter strong Daemons. On the contrary, those Daemons that they met along the way to the Daemon King's Castle were weak, and it hurt his heart to knock down the old man that was barely standing, even as Alfio cut down the Daemons that wielded weapons without mercy.

That's why when they were surprised when they, who had arrived at the Daemon King's Castle without fighting a single strong Daemon, had suffered a crushing defeat under the large warrior that guarded the gates.

Judging that soldier as an [Event Boss], Alfio ran for dear life, and leading his companions in a so called [Dirty Trick], they vaulted the wall and entered from the back door.

If they defeated the event boss, you would definitely get strong equipment. So he figured that if he got his hands on that equipment first with [Exploits], he would be able to defeat that warrior easily.

For Alfio, who had the memory of a previous world, and who read so many novels about transmigration, it was important and only-too-natural that he use any means to deprive the enemy of their abilities and take their equipment.

Even when he himself had provoked them, Alfio declared justice upon his opponents the moment they called him names and pulled out their weapons, as robbing them of their equipment and money should have been permitted.

"S-See, Cheria. Is this not a good weapon?"

".....yep"

Cheria received the longsword that Alfio held out to her, and nodded

awkwardly.

Although she was watching Alfio robbing the items of unrelated parties under some unknown pretext, she had convinced herself that the opponent was a bad person.

As a childhood friend, Cheria had longed for Alfio, who was knowledgeable in various things ever since she was a child, and tried to tell herself that he was right.

However, as the daughter of a knight, Cheria innately resisted the idea of robbing and thieving even for the sake of triumphing over an enemy.

Of all the equipment that they were trying to steal, most of them weren't necessary. The majority of them were just very well-decorated and would sell for a high price. Practical items almost didn't exist.

Furthermore, Cheria began to feel something like a sense of anxiety and discomfort while watching Alfio, who was gathering all these items gleefully.

“.....”

Her best friend, the Elf Anteikowa, and the noble sisters couldn't do anything like [Stealing] the items of others, so they kept a lookout at the entrance of the treasure room, the three of them constantly talking, occasionally casting a cold gaze at the two.

“Cheria, what's the matter?”

“.....nothing.”

Alfio raised his voice as Cheria breathed a sigh. It's good that he noticed these fine details, but.....

“Alright, now then, let's get out of this castle quickly and leave this town.”

“...eh?”

“.....eh?”

Was he not imitating a thief to defeat a mighty enemy? The moment Cheria tried to open her mouth to say so,

“...!?”

"Wha!?"

They felt an ominous, mighty, and terrible [Presence] coming from underground.

It was a power so huge that it would be absurd to measure, a mighty presence filled with an overwhelming killing intent..... Anteikowa that felt the [Wickedness] in particular and turned blue in the face, while Athena and Ophelia ran towards each other.

"...Wha-what's happening...!?"

"Th-the Daemon King...?"

"....."

While Athena soothed Ophelia, who had been frightened, Athena realized that that [Presence] wasn't something that they had felt for the *first time*, but hesitated to speak.

It wasn't possible.....

Athena pushed this feeling that caught on the corner of her mind, which would have been the answer to that [Uncomfortable Feeling] that she had felt all along, in fear of the [Truth], directly into the deepest corners of her heart.

".....Al-sama, everyone, I think it would be best if we retreated now..."

"Ye-yeah, that's right! Let's retreat"

"Yes, that's right...Let's retreat like Atty says. Even if it is not the Daemon King, I can feel the evil of a thousand Demons."

And so, just like that, the Shiguresu Hero's party decided to withdraw from the Daemon King's castle without even engaging in an honest battle.

Whether this was lucky, or unlucky for the world, cannot be known.

* * *

".....What is..... this..."

Daemon King Hebrad drank in the sight of the intimately-familiar [Daemon King Territory], and murmured in blank surprise.

The Kingdom that he had seen since birth, the Daemon King territory that had been covered in black clouds regardless of day or night, was exposed to the dazzling sun under the blue sky.

He stood there in mute amazement for a couple of minutes, but when he saw the half-destroyed Daemon King Castle, and the Daemon tribes that were gathered there in worship, Hebrad flew over to the Daemon King's Castle.

"Uho!"

"Francois...!"

Hebrad descended into the garden of the Daemon King's Castle, and as the Dwarf girl sprinted over with a thundering [dodododododododododododo], Hebrad cast [**Impact Absorption**], [**Physical Defense**], [**Physical Barrier**], [**Inertial Dampening**], and [**Body Strengthening**] magics, so he was able to catch the Dwarf girl even as he was pushed back *only* 5 meters, tearing up the ground below him.

"You're alright, Francois"

"Uho... uho, uhohoh~"

"Is that so...? I'm sorry, I made you worry."

"Uho, uho, uhohoh, uhoo"

"What...!? Such a thing....."

"Uho, uho, uho~"

As Francois described the circumstances, she twisted herself with a *mojimoji* as if a little shy.

"A human girl...? Is that so, I see."

"Uhoo! Uhohoh"

"It's useless. There might be danger in the castle. Francois, leave the castle and take a look at the circumstance of the people"

"Uho~o, uhoo"

"Don't say such things. ...I know your feelings, but please understand."

"Uho..."

Francois had just a little bit of sadness on her face, but she nodded her giant, boulder-like head to Hebrad's words, and, shouldering her beloved elephant that was frightened by all the events, she walked gracefully toward the gates of the castle.

Hebrad sent her off while gazing at her big back, filled with adoration as she walked off.

According to Francois, pillars of [Gold] and [Jet Black] destroyed the Daemon King's Castle as they ascended into the air, and after they scattered the [Clouds of Malice], the [Demon Beast] was followed behind [Golden Angel] as it descended into the Daemon King's Castle.

The Dwarf language was hard to fully understand for anyone that wasn't a Dwarf.

She didn't know their name, but Francois spoke about a female friend that she had made for the first time, and was very worried about her.

Francois was pure of heart, and although he was happy that she finally had a friend of the same age, even if it was a human being, Hebrad also felt the loneliness of a father with a daughter of that age.

And so, Hebrad had sent Francois, who was a mighty warrior, outside of the castle, as judging by the state of the castle, it was highly unlikely that a human girl would be able to survive where the [Demon Beast] was involved.

"It's a pity....."

For Francois, that human girl was a very important existence.

Those words that she left behind

"[Uhoo]"

Everything had been put into that single word.

Hebrad pulled himself together with a heavy heart and headed into the castle.

Expecting that the [Demon Beast] would have started to move..... and that unknown [Golden Angel]..... their presences were..... no, he had to make sure

of what they [Intended] for the whole Daemon race.

Chapter 13: Becoming an Idol, Part 2

I returned to the Daemon King's Castle since I had something to do.

You might say that I made a dangerous bet in fighting against Rinne for the sake of doing this.

It was just that [Important].

I had both the strong [Will] and the [Duty] to do so.

“[Mofu~]”

“[.....Oil”

I could hear Rinne's voice, but I didn't care.

I'm busy mofumofuing Rinne's fur for the first time in 11 years.

Rinne was complaining, but he rolled over so it was easy to mofu properly.
Fufu, this naughty tsundere!

I was also properly in my cat mode.

It was pleasant mofuing with human skin, but it was hard to give up the feeling of burving myself into Rinne's fur.

Because it's Demon fur it's always silky and doesn't dirty, and even if I rolled myself in it I wouldn't get entangled, and being as smooth as it is fluffy, the stomach part is soft, when I was wrapped in it there was a complete feeling of relief and healing.

Furthermore, there's a nice scent too, I say.

It's the rich aroma and intoxicating sweet smell of a fruit wine that'd been left to ferment for many years. I felt it even more clearly than when I was in the Demon world because our souls were connected.

As I was in the midst of swimming about in Rinne's fur and *goronyaning*, I was suddenly pushed into the air.

"[What? What?]"

When the huge figure of that idiot Rinne suddenly disappeared, I quickly returned to sobriety, became flustered and searched for Rinne.

"[I'm Here, Yurushia]"

"[.....eh? Rinne-]"

Turning back towards the source of the voice, there was a normal-sized black cat that was slightly larger than me, standing there with a look of triumph on its face.

"[O, OOOOOOOHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH, Rinneeeeeeeeeeeeeeee]"

"[oWAa]"

Seeing Rinne in [Black Cat] mode suddenly, my sense of reason broke.

Cute cute cute cute Rinne is so cute! Oh my god what a thing!

I remember that I loved [Kitty cats] from that memory of the dream world, but it was different being one myself compared to seeing one before my eyes.

Whenever the cats of this world were in front of me, they would howl like [Shaaaa] or [Migya] and run away, and not let me hold them as much as I wanted! That's why!

[So anyways... let's stop now~]

kapu (TL: Bite)

I'm reflecting.....

Although it seems like I've broken completely, I'm fine.

Oh my, the charm of mofumofu kitty is terrifying. For me, a Demon who was famous for keeping her calm, to forget myself.....

Truly he is the strongest in the Demon world..... terrifying.

Thanks to Rinne's [Kapu] I was able to stop myself. Rinne's fangs hurt, even if they've become tiny. But I was licked immediately.

Whether you call it following the flow, or my apology after punishment, this time I was being mofumofu'd by Rinne. It's tickly.

We were in the half-broken Daemon King's Castle. Since we had blown away the upper half, the sunlight was warm and I felt like a cat.

"[Come to think of it, when did Rinne get the ability to turn into a [Black cat]?]"

"[Not until today...]"

As Rinne murmured as if amazed, he stopped mofuing and stretched out across the floor just like a real cat.

"[Probably... after I received a name from you. The magic power and my body stabilized quite considerably.]"

I don't feel a violent presence spreading from the current Rinne, unlike the time when we had just met while I was in the Demon World.

It's calm... is it alright for me to say it? The anger and impatience have disappeared, and unlike the first time we met..... there's a more mature atmosphere in the air.

When I listened calmly like this, I loved Rinne's mature voice after all.

For a while he was being too restrictive and I [Ran away from home], and I also rebelled against the brutal Rinne, but after all that he's calmed down.

Although it's calm.....

"[Hey..... won't you [Manifest]...?]"

As I asked him while rolling and lying there on the warm bed that was the floor, Rinne made a little delicate face.

.....even though he's a cat, he's dextrous.

"[Thanks to the fact I was [named], my presence has also grown. I don't know how many sacrifices it would take for me to obtain a vessel. and also.....]"

Rinne was a [Demon Beast] with a brutality that was entirely different from the elegant taste of the [Greatest Demons].

"[It's greedy to ignore the nature of [Demons] to kill.]"

[Demons] were fundamentally different from [Gods].

I don't know if the thing called God really exists, and since believing in them did nothing, and disasters and unhappiness were called the scourge of god, they only sought the [Innocent Hearts] of Man.

On the contrary, the Demons ... while the low-ranking demons were all stupid... all the Greater Demons knew about the [Value] of humans, and to increase the value of the [Forbidden Knowledge] that they dispensed, they cultivated them.

Put simply, both of them were sweatshop companies, but the Demon enterprise was the one that would [Feed] its employees. If you counted the seafood that I gave, I would likely have been superior even amongst Demons.

Anyway, Rinne, who didn't manifest, would not be able to stay long in this world.

"[So what will you do now? Although I said as much, I won't be going back to the Demon World for another few hundred years.]"

I'm not being selfish, but this is one line I refuse to cross.

I laid bare my stubbornness, and bared my fangs in a bitter smile.

"[If you're returning in several hundred years, it's not actually very long... but I will probably only be able to maintain the name for about a year. What do you think?]"

"[I see.....]"

It looks like we won't be able to manage it somehow, huh.....

For the time being, since everything else is troublesome and the mood has become calm, let's worry about the small things later.

Rinne felt the same too, and I suddenly felt someone's eyes on me while the two of us were splayed out on the sunny floor.

..... My embarrassing moment was just peeped at by someone else!!?

*

Hebrad was perplexed.

When he entered the Daemon King's Castle, he was chasing after the presence of the [Demon Beast], but the presence that he felt was that the anger from when it had first appeared had faded, replaced by a calm of an even greater intensity.

"What... on earth"

And as for this thing that he felt cuddled close to it, just who was this [Presence]?

From Francois' witness account, he thought that it was some [Golden Angel] that was worshipped by the abandoned Daemons, and even though that presence didn't have any feelings of violence or vulgarity, it was ominous and terrifying: completely something that was [Malicious].

Hebrad didn't know whether it was a Demon, but perhaps, it was an [Evil] existence on the same level as that of the [Demon Beast].

"Angel? or Demon.....?"

Either way, if he made a mistake in his interactions here, the Daemon King's territory would perish.

For the whole of the Daemons that had once forsaken the Daemon King territory. Hebrad laughed at himself as a failure of the Daemon King that that was still unable to let go even at the very end.

Although he had given his whole life until now for the sake of his vengeance on the [Human society] that had betrayed him, at the end it seemed that he was unable to discard the naivety of his [Humanity].

Was it a mistake to attempt to implement reform as a tool of vengeance, to have gotten attached because he'd gotten involved more than was necessary.....?

In that case, he would play out his role as the [Daemon King] that was king of all the Daemons, and die for the sake of the Daemons.

With this determination, Hebrad headed towards his [Grave].

"....."

Seeing two [Cats] there basking and relaxing in the sun, he could not close his

mouth that had sprung open.

“.....Two... [Demon Beasts]...?”

But it looked and felt like a cat..... Even so, that ominous and fiendish [presence] threw Hebrad's head for a spin.

For there to be two of the legendary existence called the [Demon Beast], was this some sort of joke?

While Hebrad was stunned out of his common sense, the golden cat seemed to have started out of panic, and begun to move, and the previously gentle air was filled with the incredible intimidation of a [Demon].

Chapter 14: Becoming an Idol, Part 3

I wonder what I said..... The person who appeared in front of us was a silver-haired, black-skinned, slightly sullen and cool-looking older man.

“[.....]”

I felt like Rinne wanted to say something, and since it was good to give one's beloved some space, I gave him some elbowroom. Wait, that's not it.

Yeah, yeah, this person was that Daemon who [Peeked] at us.

I had been seen while I forgot myself and was *kyahaha* and *ufufu-ing* and mofuing with all my might. It seems I was embarrassed and instinctively let out my [Presence], but because it wasn't a misrepresentation, it was safe. I judged that I could win the court case.

“[.....King of the Daemons?]”

..... eh?

Rinne got up, and in his enormous [Dark Beast] form, he murmured towards that older uncle in a low voice.

King of the Daemons...? Daemon King? Francois' husband (candidate)...?

That uncle... er, rather, the Daemon King-san, who seemed to have overcome his stiffness at Rinne's voice, kneeled down in a hurry.

“.....I am the King of the Daemons, Hebrad”

The Daemon King-san's waist was bent really low..... Are you a salaryman, as well?

Even though he seemed to have an absurdly delicious soul, I shouldn't sample it.....

Is that...? The Daemon King-san looked up at me motionlessly.

That's no good Daemon King-san, you have a wife (to be) you know? I can't betray my friends.....eh? Is that wrong?

“You, in the past, I heard of the [Golden Beast] that was the talk of the

humans. Art thou the same one, who has scattered the clouds of the Daemon King territory, and gave the land this blessing?"

I'm being looked at with entreating eyes..... Before, when I was in my Demon body, although there was fear, but I wasn't being shown behavior like I was detested.

When I glimpsed at Rinne, who already lost interest, I figured that it didn't matter and yawned a little.

This cat-haired guy.....

I don't quite understand, but I, as a Demon, can't not greet my friend's husband (provisional).

"[I am greatly honored by your politeness, Lord Daemon King.....]"

Wh-what's this feeling?

It's the first time I've ever talked to another race as a Demon, and I don't understand the feeling.

But it seemed that I've been recognized as an [Intelligent] Demon properly, and Daemon King-san openly made a relieved face.

"I would like to request something of the two of you. The Daemon tribes are on the edge of a crisis. As a result, we have presently sortied the entire Daemon King's army, so by all means I would like to borrow your power."

"[Why?]"

When I automatically replied, the Daemon King-san stiffened again. He's mentally weak.

Am I not at an advantage?

"Well, that is..."

Daemon King-san faltered in his words, and then resolved himself again, and began to speak slowly.

"I... because I hated humankind, I lived in order to bring ruin to human beings. I won't lie about my desire to save Daemonkind.but, I still cannot forgive humans..."

“[.....]”

While speaking, he remembered his resentment for humankind, and Daemon King-san's muddy hatred leaked out with his magic power. it looks delicious.

That sort of reason, I can certainly agree with.

If I could just get this [Soul], if the contract was for one or two countries, it'd be alright to do it, it seemed.

“[No]”

“...W-..... Why? If my soul is not enough, then I will dedicate all of the souls of the human beings that the Daemon King's Army will kill from here on in! Then...”

He wanted to destroy humans. He wanted to save the Daemons. For that purpose, he would offer up the Daemon King's soul and the humans' souls to the Demon.

Both of the contracts don't make me lose much, but regardless of the Demons around here, [I] cannot accept it.

“[It's no good. The humans' [souls], were already [My] things to begin with.]”

This [world], was my feeding ground where I can get whatever I wanted just by reaching my claws out for it.

In other words, it was an environment with a remote control, sweets, and a refrigerator beside my Kotatsu for all eternity.I wonder why, but I had a sudden feeling of depravity.

Although I'm now doing some deliberate [cultivation] for some of them, I just can't stand stopping now for the sake of getting a bunch of cheap souls in large quantities.

.....My thoughts seemed to have turned rather Demonic.

“.....Haha, is that so, is that so?”

Daemon King-san who had been overcome with blank amazement at my words began to laugh.

Would he give in to his despair and attack me? I thought that would happen,

but unexpectedly, Daemon King-san had a relieved face.

"If you are as much of a [Demon] as you claim, the humans will perish soon.
.....fufu, that's right, humans and Daemons are both [Livestock]..."

"[...Y-yeag]"

I don't intend to do so, but..... well, Daemon King-san is convinced, so, ah, whatever.

Daemon King-san once again kneeled in front of me and prostrated himself deeply.

".....I have no regrets. I offer my soul."

Arara..... did that just happen?

Rinne threw a fleeting glance at me at those words, but I hit him with my tail and held him down.

Although I want to eat it very much.

"[Daemon King, make the [Person (female)] around you happy. That is your obligation.]"

To eat Francois' husband (nearly confirmed), would be a poor thing to do.

When I said those words, Daemon King-san had a very surprised face, and lowered his head again.

"After all..... all the surrounding Daemon tribes were worshipping you, and I could feel the depth of your benevolence... You don't seem to be a [Demon Beast]..... it's as though you're the [God of the Daemons]"

"[Well, I suppose.....]"

Oh dear..... In addition to having an embarrassing nickname, now there's equally embarrassing feelings.

My heart hurts whenever Rinne gives me that look that says [What are you doing, you...]

"[Well then, will you stop the invasion of the Daemon King's Army?]"

I tried to change the topic for now.

It'll become a problem if the city where Rick and Noel were became a battlefield.ah, it came out without me saying anything, is that alright? Well, even if I'm not there, it'll be alright.

".....It can't be done. Your benevolence gave us the blessings of the sun, but the land around here was barren from the start, and these several thousand years where the Daemon elements have lived, the crops have never grown properly. Now, unless we invade, the Daemon tribe will only die of hunger..."

They were cornered more than I thought.

Will plants not grow where the Daemons dwell... That [cloud] that had collected the grudges and the miasma tasted like [Cotton Candy], and the Daemon element in the earth.....

Hmm?Wait a minute.

"[That's no problem. Leave it *all* to me]"

".....Oh! Goddess"

And so, it was stopped.....

I moved a little, and approached the thick wall that hadn't broken when I hit it. Fufufu, today I'll get to show the results of my *research*.

"[Summoning Magic Formation!]"

Pouring my magic power into the [Spirit Language], I drew out an enormous magic circle on the huge wall.

"Thi-this is !"

Mori...morimori...morimorimorimorimori...

A black shadow emerged from the summoning circle..... that's right, it's an [Infinitely Unlimited Seaweed Summoning Circle].

"....."

"[.....]"

At this magnificent sight, Daemon King-sama and Rinne were both so impressed that they went silent.

"[This magic formation, can not only summon seaweed from this continent, but from all of the seas of the world indefinitely. With this, the food problem is solved]"

"...Wa-wait a minute, can it be turned off?!"

As I boasted of my research results, Daemon King-san raised the question. Being eager to learn is a wonderful thing. If the magic power is cut off to that, and the food is gone, there might be insecurity again.

I dragged Millaine into my studies for this. The [Unlimited Wakame Seaweed] is a revolutionary magic circle that boasts performance that is six times higher in comparison to regular magic circles, with a magic power use of less than half that of a conventional one.

Being given such a wonderful thing, he would surely think that he was special, and he would feel just like the favored grandson of a grandfather and be happy.

I nodded slowly to reassure him.

"[Worry not. There are no problems whatsoever. This magic circle draws on the Daemon elements present in the soil to power itself, so it won't stop easily.]"

"....."

Daemon King-san, who was now standing before a pile of seaweed that was so large that it could not even fit it on a 10-ton truck, sat down as if he was exhausted.

I wonder if he was that relieved.

"[Oh, right, right, because the formation will continue for thousands of years with the Daemon element in this area, if you don't do your best in eating it, it'll bury the Daemon King territory, so please be careful.]"

".....!?"

Daemon King-san jolted vigorously at my words, and smiling a little with a "Haha" he placed both his hands and knees on the floor loosely.

After doing good things, the Demon becomes comfortable.

Daemon King-san was muttering something or another, but Rinne gently tapped the Daemon King-san with his giant paws affectionately.

“.....She’s a Demon after all.....”

* * *

For a few days after that, we stayed at Daemon King-san’s house.

I was in my [Demon Beast (cat)] mode when I came into contact with Daemon King-san, but I properly reported to Francois in my [Human] mode.

Well, today at Daemon King-san’s request I’m going to show myself to the Daemons.

The people’s belief in god seems to be something like the desire for an [Idol].

Finally, my debut!

“[Well then..... what should I sing?]”

“It’s alright if you don’t sing.”

“[...You don’t need to be reserved, you know?]”

“I’m not being reserved”

“[You don’t need to fuss about the problem of having a backup dancer while I sing?]”

“Please do not sing. Please do not dance”

What’s this.....? Daemon King-san’s attitude towards me seems a little [Sloppy].

For the sake of everyone’s peace of mind, I wanted to be in human mode. I thought that it would be good if my dress was a miniskirt.

It’s for everyone’s sake... It’s not that I want to sing... It’s true~.

Even though so many people are gathered here..... *kusun*

When I spread my wings in my [Demon Beast (cat)] mode and made my appearance, all of the Daemons kneeled down on the spot and began to worship me.

..... wait, what? Wasn’t there supposed to be cheering?

“Master!”

“[...eh?]”

Turning around to face a familiar voice that I suddenly heard, Demon butler Noa and Demon maid Fannie teleported in out of thin air.

“.....We were looking for you”

“[Ah~, sorry, there was the matter of [Him], [Rinne]..]”

“eh?”

“ah...”

Noa and Fannie hurriedly kneeled down before Rinne who was beside me in his black cat mode.

“Ri-Rinne-sama...”

“[At ease. Why were you in such a hurry...?]”

Waving his two tails calmly when Noa lapsed into silence after greeting us, Rinne prompted him on.

“Yes. Actually, the Daemon King army has gathered together and begun to advance, and we were led by Roderick-sama and Noel-sama out to search for Mistress, and after meeting with the mercenary group and knights numbering 500, they started to fight.”

“[eh.....]”

Isn’t that terribly dangerous? The Daemon King’s army was still well in excess of a million strong.

Daemon King-san’s black face also turned blue..... how deft.

“Foolish... did they not receive the message. Who was it.....Geas?”

He murmured. There wasn’t a need to fight anymore.

“Well, it’s alright?”

“[How is it alright?]”

When I yelled my tsukkomi in without thinking at Noa’s mutter, Fannie continued from the side.

“Uhm, well, Tina-chan and Nia-chan have gradually become unable to endure it and seemed to have started rampaging, so I came to pick you up—”

“[.....eEEEEEEHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!?]”

How many of them will survive.....

Chapter 15: On the Battlefield, Part 1

A man was knocked into hell from the pinnacle of happiness.

He didn't even know the meaning of misfortune when he was a child.

Born the only child of two parents, with no poverty in sight for his dual-income family, the man had no doubt in thinking that his was an extremely normal household.

He noticed when his parents did not come for the school's athletics meet. Did the whole family only eat together about once a week? They weren't able to have a family conversation, not even once, even as the days went by.

He alone was the only person who thought of it as a family, but for the rest of them who lived in that house, they were just not interested in family life. They were just cohabiting.

If he had noticed it, perhaps he would have realized that he was unhappy.

However, the man himself didn't think that he was unhappy. He knew that there were unhappier things in the world, and, above all, there was a girl, a childhood friend, who worried about him.

Almost every day, ever since they were young, she would bring him lunch. He was the first person that she treated to her mother's cooking at her house.

It could be said that the man was raised by the girl's family.

A father and a gentle mother that were kind-hearted, a bratty older brother that thought of him as his younger brother, playing together in elementary school, becoming conscious of her in middle school, and becoming lovers in high school. Although he slightly ran wild in various ways, out of consideration for the girl's family, he kept a pure relationship.

And..... when they lived together after they graduated from university, while thinking of paying for their marriage with his own money, he went to the government office to register their official marriage and have her entered into his family register... but fell into a manhole along the way.

When he came to, he was in a dark, shabby room.

Actually, he'd noticed that the room was shabby months before he managed to get his eyes to look straight... the man had become a baby.

He quickly realized that the world was not a good one.

A dark sky that never changed, regardless of day or night, people who had horns or scaled skin seemed to be very normally taking care of him.

But he couldn't be bothered to care about such things.

Where was this? He didn't care how or why he became a baby.

He had finally had his wish come true, with her... with the childhood friend that was his wife. They were supposed to be having their first night together, and he couldn't understand why he had to be in this place.

He felt frustrated every day. Because he wanted to return to his wife so much, he cried like a baby, but since he was a baby, nobody knew.

One day, a turning point in his life came.

He was taken along while huddled together with his parents into a dim basement where adults with beast and monster features were gathered.

He saw a black altar. Noticing the drifting odor of rotting blood, his face paled.

When he looked at his parents with a questioning look regarding that [Demonic] altar, he finally noticed that his parents' eyes had the same look that the parents of his previous life had, as if they were looking at some [Other] creature.

He had neither the horns nor scales of his parents.

He understood that he had been dragged here as a [Sacrifice] for a demon.

The ceremony began. He couldn't do anything to resist with that baby's body of his.

Why did things turn out this way.....?

He wanted to return to my wife. It was nothing new. He wanted to go back to my loving wife and escape from this hell.....

The magic circle shone around him, and in the instant that the man who he thought of as his father swung down the rusty dagger.....

[...Surely, just these sacrifices and offerings to try and summon me... it seems I'm being taken lightly.]

The dagger that was swung down stopped right in front of his eyes as if time had stopped.

All of a sudden, everything that he could see around him had frozen in place, and it seemed that time really had stopped.

In the frozen world in which only he could move, that [Voice] spoke only to him.

[Among these, the one with the strongest soul turns out to be a baby... But even if I took your soul, I could hardly interact with the world... So, I will make a contract to you. Name your wish. And in return, what will you give to me?]

He didn't hesitate, and wished instantly to return to his wife. He didn't need anything else. He swore to offer all of himself.

[Then I will take your soul after you die. However, that is not enough for me to let you cross worlds. What will you give? The answers are before you.]

At those words, he instantly shut his mouth..... and answered what the Demon desired to hear.

* * *

By the order of Geas, the Court Mage, whom Daemon King Hebrad had charged with the right to command, the Daemon King's Army, who had been spread out in their various units, had been assembled, and the invasion had begun.

Total number: 400,000.

Since there was a lack of food and some of the Daemons were slow-footed, there should have been some variation in the time they took to arrive, but, still, wasn't this was far too few?

The Daemon King's Army had left the Daemon King's territory with a troop well in excess of 2 million. Where did the vast majority of them disappear

to.....?

“Hurry up! As Beast King Gallus’ subordinates, it is shameful to be late to battle!”

The Beast King’s second-in-command, the White Monkey General Gretel, directed 100,000 soldiers as he ran through the Forest of Monsters.

Gretel’s head was full of impatience and irritation. Thus far, he had subdivided the army to move, but unexpectedly some of them did not return and their numbers had been decreased in vain.

Something was lurking in the forest...

Using their bestial instincts, they sensed someone in the shadows, and the movements of the Beast King’s army became sluggish.

Relying solely on their animalistic night vision, they were able to run through the woods at night, but it seems that their fellows that were beside them had run into [Something] unfamiliar.

“.....Hieee,”

Someone’s muffled screaming was heard, and then a couple of the Beastmen Daemons burst into tiny pieces.

“Wh, what!?”

“An enemy!”

They could faintly discern a distorted figure in the darkness of night.

When someone cast a magical light quickly to try to illuminate things, there was the figure of a [Demon], wearing tattered clothes, laughing while holding up the face of a beast and slurping on fresh blood.

“Hiiiiiiiiieeeeeeeeeeee!”

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAaaaaaaa!?”

“GyaaaaaaaaAAAGGGGGGGGGGG!”

The brave soldiers of the Beast King’s Army screamed out at the presence of the [Demon] that evoked the fundamental [Terror] of living beings.

Not restricted to one place, the screams of terror arose throughout the entire army, and the massacre began.

"Steel your hearts! The Demons will take advantage of your fear!"

Gretel scolded his men even though he was confused as well.

Why had these Demons appeared here? Furthermore, they weren't simply Demons. [Greater Demons] that had manifested within a vessel... and there was a presence that felt even stronger than those.

In front of Gretel, a huge and stout Demon appeared.

".....Gollow...?"

The Demon's face and body shape greatly resembled the 3rd Army's Pig Beast General, Gollow.

"Did you make Gollow... your vessel... aaAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!"

With the righteous fury for his friend whose soul had been devoured, Gretel slammed his huge battle axe against the Demon.

[...Buhahahaha]

The Demon picked up and crushed the battle axe as it roared and grabbed into Gretel's chest, eating the heart while it was still beating, savoring the desperation and hatred that it was full of.

[Nya]

In that instant, with that slashing sound, the Demon and Gretel were sent flying in little pieces.

A golden blade cut through the night, and a single girl emerged from the darkness.

"Hey~, that's no good, you know? I thought I told you that you could only have one soul (snack) a day?"

Her voice was not particularly loud, with the tone of an older sister in high school scolding her younger brother, but all of the Greater Demons in the area straightened their backs as their faces stiffened.

The Demon who had been scolded with that carefree voice, seemed to have

had his existence blown away with a single blow, but Nia herself seemed to not care at all.

The number of Daemons that Millaine had turned into Vampires and transferred over to Nia were in the thousands. They had also used a large amount of souls, and had raised the number of the [Newtype Greater Demon] by the thousands.

Nia just did not have the patience to educate all of these new Demons.

Along with Tina, they had split the 1500 Demons between the two of them, and came here for practical training and soul collection.

"Al~right, Everyone~, stop moving~ The bad children's meals, will be *that* thing, okay?"

Nia's voice sent the Demons scrambling in panic.

All the Demonic pleasure and smiling disappeared from their faces, and 749 Greater Demons tried their best to slaughter them all.

This time around, the boxed lunch for Nia's cohort of Demons was 15 kilograms of dried seaweed and one octopus. The snack was one soul.

The Demons spoke together.

"[To be frank we're getting tired of eating seaweed... But unlike Tina-sama's cohort, we don't have any octopus. Compared to that, we're better off, but I prefer Fannie-sama after all. She will give us [Black Candy] if we do our best. She rarely takes anyone out with her, but if anyone is taken along they're the envy of everyone else. Besides..... that thing is dangerous.....]"

It seems that [the naughty children's meals] Nia spoke of was a terrifying existence.

The moment their Master Yurushia had her face cramp up from the gem from that [Seal], the Lesser Demons whose egos were weak had multiplied and prospered, squealing with a "[Kisha, Kisha~]" and had had their mouths 'willingly' stuffed with that dreamlike [Seaweed].

Thanks to Noa using it properly, the Demons had stopped complaining about their meals.

And thus in that way (?) the Daemon King's Army had their numbers quietly reduced in fear and deep darkness.

Chapter 16: On the Battlefield, Part 2

“[Let there be Light!]”

Anteikowa’s Holy Magic was applied on Alfio’s [Holy Blade].

“Alright, Rock Cutter!”

Using the [Sword Skills] that he had acquired from an old man living in Shiguresu’s forest in exchange for 50 Chinese cabbages, Alfio slew the two horned giants.

“Al, here too!”

“Roger”

The commanding officer of the Daemon King’s army had crossed swords with Cheria, and was chasing her down with about 10 Daemon soldiers.

“Lightning Spear!”

Ophelia’s lightning struck at the bodies of the Daemon soldiers, sapping their muscles of strength,

“Fireball!”

Meanwhile, Athena’s fireballs burned up the Daemon soldiers who were immobilized.

“Yaa!”

Cheria’s saber pierced deeply into the heart as she took the life of the commander who was distracted by the spectacle.

“We did it, guys!”

“Yeah”

“...mhmm”

“Yes...”

“.....”

Their reactions were lacking as a reward for Alfio, who was working hard with

a refreshed expression. Recently, even when he called out to Athena, there were times where she wouldn't reply.

Whether in battle or while adventuring, she had relied on Alfio previously.

However, she would suddenly become cold when their bodies came into contact.

“.....”{Was it something I said!?}

It felt like his destiny had been *twisted* at some point.

Did it turn strange somewhere.....?

Anteikowa admittedly turned pale from shock when they were being pursued by the guards in Kolkopo.

Cheria's attitude became strange when they were searching for items in the Daemon King's Castle.

Athena and Cheria's eyes went wide when he told them that they were going to escape from the Daemon King's Castle and were going to withdraw from the Daemon King's territory.

Wasn't it natural to punish those bastards who quarreled with you?

Wasn't it natural to steal the things of one's enemies?

Wasn't it the basics of an adventurer to escape from an enemy that one couldn't beat?

Isn't that what all the protagonists in the stories do?

“.....”

Originally, he should have only come after he had gotten stronger. He was supposed to have been able to train on the way towards the Daemon King's Territory. If he was strong, most of these things could have been forgiven.

And he should never have fought against the main force of the Daemon King army without gaining strength like this.

On their way back towards the human territory, Alfio got embroiled into the war.

In order for him to regain his position among his comrades, Alfio had to intervene in this battle.

“Al!”

When he heard Anteikowa’s voice and turned back to look, he saw tens of giants that were larger than the one that he had defeated.

“...R-ru...”

Let’s escape. Alfio wanted to say it, but he couldn’t speak the words through Athena’s silent stare.

Athena pressed Alfio to show off his power as a [Hero], so in a way, that meant that she still had expectations of him, but Alfio felt like he was already going to cry.

About 10,000 of the Daemon King’s Army was here.

Because there were only about 1300 humans facing them, rather than simply roughly crushing them with numbers, they deployed an elite force, 1,000-strong, to devastate them.

Alfio, whose aim was to build a harem for himself in peace, was not ready to die.

Nevertheless, he had raised his sword stubbornly at this time, and the rightmost giant had suddenly been blown away.

“.....Eh?”

What appeared, was the figure of a [Warrior] clad in a navy blue surcoat on top of his silver armor.

“GaAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!”

The giants became aware of the warrior, and turned their spears towards him.

A giant that stood over 5 meters swung with his club, but the warrior deflected it with the shield in his left hand, and slashed at the knees of the giant with a golden Magic Sword in his right.

The warrior who wasn’t afraid of the giants approached, slashed, and with

movements that were faithful to the basics like a knight, he swept past them with his shield and kept swinging.

“Fuhn!”

With a single overhead swing with both of his arms, he sliced the last giant apart, club and all.

“...Roderick-sama...?”

From someone leaked out that line..... Behind Roderick's line of sight, the appearance of close to one hundred Daemons nearly caused the Shiguresu Hero Party to scream out loud.

“[μua]!”

The genuine [Spirit Language] that was not simplified by the elves echoed across the battlefield.

The golden sword raised by the youth let off a light, and he sent the majority of the Daemons flying with a single blow.

“Noel?”

Roderick called out to the youth, and he returned a fearless smile with that lovely girl-like face.

The soldiers that were holding themselves behind him all raised a cheer of [Hero!] in celebration.

Noel and Roderick. The [Hero of the Saint Kingdom], and the [Crusader], had brought out 500 men to follow the girl who was their [Saint].

They were made up of Holy Knights and Knights, along with strong mercenaries, but if they had actually encountered the Daemon King's Army, they would have been defeated by the difference in numbers.

Reality, however had proven different.

The legendary [Hero], the [Crusader], and the [Saint], who were blessed by the spirit of light, had arrived in the Daemon King's territory with only the three of them, and had enough power to take the head of the Daemon King.

But the [Power of Light] that had been suppressed for *some* reason, bloomed

rapidly now that it was temporarily away from the [Irregular], and they fought even with the 10,000 Daemon soldiers.

“.....” {How...}

Alfio was shocked by the difference in the [Class] of hero.

Until now, he had been making efforts along the template, and while he had become strong enough to be called a Hero in Shiguresu.....

{Am I..... not the main character.....?}

He looked at the [Hero] in the distance, who had a strong power, was praised by the knights, had royal friends, and with extraordinarily beautiful girls in his group.

Alfio's companions, also looked at them with dazzling eyes..... like the eyes that that they had previously made towards Alfio.

“Oy...”

Alfio returned to reality with that call out.

Roderick noticed Alfio, and saw him calmly walking towards him silently.

“...Hey, Your Highness, I don't think we're so close that we can address each other so intimately? For lending you our power, some gratitude is in order.”

His pride refusing to admit defeat, Alfio replied to Roderick.

But, Roderick merely glanced at him.

“...Ah, my thanks then.”

He just walked past Alfio, and stood in front of Athena and Ophelia.

“You guys, how long are you going to continue living like that...?”

“.....Roderick-sama...”

“I, I...”

Although Ophelia could do it, Athena couldn't take the eyes of the boy who had been her fiancé since a young age and averted her eyes.

As everyone was rendered mute by the delicate atmosphere, only one person called out, his voice full of anger.

“What are y-you doing with my companions!”

At that, even Anteikowa and Cheria knit their eyebrows, and tried to grasp onto Alfio who tried to drive away Roderick with his arm.

“I was just speaking to my cousin...?”

“I don’t care about your relationship!”

Although Roderick nearly sighed at Alfio while he kept his silence, he raised his head towards the sound that he heard from afar.

“Let’s cut the talk. It seems that the Daemon King’s army is getting impatient.”

* * *

When he heard that there were [Heroes] among their opponents, Beast King Gallus jumped into battle leading his Beast King Army.

“Gahahahahaha! Where are you! Heroooooooooooooo!”

If one was willing, it was quite easy to be patient with Gallus.

Although he didn’t feel like listening to Geas’ orders in the beginning, he was wary of the terrifying [Unknown] that was striking at the Daemon King’s Army and accepted the commands that Geas gave him.

However, it was different if there was a [Hero].

As a warrior and the Beast King of the Daemons, fighting the Hero was an honor, and it was his earnest wish to defeat him with nobody getting in the way.

The number of humans were small. Due to Gallus moving in, dozens of mercenaries died, and from among them... a lance made of [Light] scattered the Daemon King Army that was within the forest.

“[μυα]!”

A slash of light slaughtered hundreds of Daemons and a single boy stood there in front of Gallus.

“Oooooooh..... Hero!”

Instead of answering him, Noel crossed his golden magic sword with Gallus' in an instant.

Gokinchi...! The grey greatsword and the golden sword violently collided, and even shockwaves boomed out.

"Where is Lucy!"

"What in the world are you saying! Don't get distracted, Hero!"

Gallus' face broke into a smile as the power of the Hero was greater than he had thought.

However, it was unfortunate that the suppressed power was released because he was thinking of the girl and not because he saw Gallus as a [Worthy Enemy].

"...Then, you're just in the way"

The performance level of the weapons they had was too different.

Chipping with the first blow, at the second the blade cracked, and at the third it cut through the sword and carved through his body. In an unbelievable sight, Gallus collapsed in battle.

Noel glanced at him emotionlessly.....

".....Lucy"

He sorrowfully muttered as he turned his sword towards the Daemon King's Army.

The natural enemy of the Daemons. The butchers of the human race.

For the sake of a young girl, a terrifying little Asura was unleashed on the battlefield.

Chapter 17: On the Battlefield, Part 3

Geas was getting impatient.

He had attacked the human kingdoms with all of the Daemon King's Army and collected a large amount of souls, but someone had disturbed the operation, and now the Daemon King's Army itself was in a semi-destroyed state.

Before this, Geas had intended to release the Demon whom Daemon King Hebrad had summoned without establishing a contract, to let it kill both humans and Daemons.

For that purpose, Geas had spent several decades planning and placing secret [Soul Collection] devices around the Daemon King's and the humans' territory, waiting for that exact time.

Geas' plan required far too many [Souls].

What was the purpose of that greater Vampire and those unknown enemies that disturbed him? What had caused his plans to collapse entirely before fruition?

The human army that they encountered in their advance had high value [Souls], mostly from their knights and others, and group of ten thousand soldiers that he had sent to collect their souls efficiently were being destroyed for some reason.

“.....Shit”

muttered Geas under his breath as he looked towards the corner of his eye.

There seemed to be counters that only he could see.

The remaining number was [001].

When Geas poured 100 of the [Souls] that he had accumulated into the counter, the three digit number changed to [002].

A counter that would only increase by [1] despite pouring one hundred souls into it;

Considering how many souls he had on hand, he couldn't spend them

wantonly.

“.....What?”

Something was shining in the middle of the battlefield, and it gradually grew in intensity as he watched that [Something] slowly push through the center of the nearly 400,000-strong Daemon King’s Army.

That light..... was a wave of holy power.

“.....A Hero...!”

An apostle of light that lingered in the legends of the Daemons; the natural enemy of Daemonkind; it would be a disaster if that light was really a Hero.

That [Demon] had said the value of a soul for the Demons was determined by ‘how much emotion’ there was in each one...

Love, Hate, Sorrow, Anger, Fear, Desire, Regret, Jealousy, Happiness, Despair..... although the souls’ tastes were differently tasty to the Demonic palate, the [Sacred Light] of the Hero would surely cleanse it all.

“.....Is this the limit?”

Geas muttered bitterly as he steeled himself.

“...Geas-sama?”

The confused voices of his disciples came as they approached Geas slowly with [Flight].

“.....Sorry. But to cut things short, leave this place quickly.”

“What happened!?”

Geas did not reply to his panicking disciples, and as he began to chant [Magic], his disciples backed away, faces full of doubt over the sanity of their master.

“[Dragon Crusher]...!”

With the second highest magic power after the Daemon King, Magic General Geas released the extermination magic with his full power.

An enormous amount of heat and light bloomed as a dragon of light

approached from behind the Daemon King's Army. The soldiers were left dumbstruck as they were enveloped by the light that was cast by their ally soundlessly.

High-temperature winds savaged the survivors. After that, screams and shrieks of pain burst out, as nearly half of the Daemons were killed in that single stroke.

“.....”

Geas gathered the tens of thousands of souls which were full of fear and grudges.

However, it wasn't enough. Geas didn't have enough power for another [Dragon Crusher], and as he was trying to aim wide-area magics at the survivors, a pillar of light extended towards the sky.

“.....He managed to survive?”

*

“Such a thing.....”

As far as the eye could see there was just the earth that had been burned black and Daemons who were unmoving.

“.....upu”

Forcibly enduring the urge to vomit, Noel shook his shoulders, breathing roughly as he sank to his knees.

Noel would have followed those Daemons in their fate, had he not put up a [Composite Barrier] which combined spirit, water, and wind magic.

Although he had charged in alone, he had managed to survive thanks to the fact he hadn't been in the epicenter of the blast.

Noel's magic power had nearly been exhausted just blocking that single strike.

But even so, when he glanced at the old Daemon mage who did it, the mage glared at Noel, and began to cast another magic.

“Noel!”

A voice called him from behind.

“.....Your Highness, don’t approach!”

Roderick approached Noel with a dozen Holy Knights in tow.

Turning back, Noel gulped instinctively. The Daemons who were unable to die were there, struggling in misery.

The mercenaries, who were all worried for Noel and had desperately rushed forward, came into view, and Noel strained himself, readying his sword as Roderick arrived.

“Noel, what is this.....”

“The enemy mage... all his allies..... everyone quickly...”

“That mage...”

Feeling the might of the magic power of the mage that had begun to chant, Roderick grit his teeth.

Although there were many humans still alive, they could only be said to be barely alive and if they had to run they would all die.

Noel didn’t know if he could block it this time, and he didn’t know if Roderick and the Holy Knights would be able to survive it.

The mage had finished casting.....

An enormous [Fire Giant] that resembled the Daemons appeared, and breathed out fire.

“.....A Fire...[Greater Spirit]...?”

A summoning magic that called on a contracted, disaster-causing, [Greater Spirit], which summoned that power temporarily even without a formation.

One of the Holy Knights whispered its name, and that fact caused everyone on the spot to prepare for [Death].

“Oh, isn’t it a little too early to die?”

Golden feathers fell from the heavens.

An elegant dress of black that was darker than the night and silver that shone like the moon.

A pair of beautiful golden wings spread out as the golden angel fluttered and descended onto the cruel battlefield.

*

Spreading the angel wings from my [Shining Holy Wings] spell as I floated down, everyone raised their heads to watch me... and that Fire [Uncle] was swallowing the fire it had spit out with a stiff face.

Did all [Greater Spirits (Uncles)] react like that...

"Well, everyone. I see you're not dead yet."

As I descended, I lightly clapped my hands, and walked between those that were dead and dying.

"...[Let the light of healing shine down upon you]..."

The [Devil magic], which combined both spirit magic and holy magic, was scattered with a flutter of my golden wings and healed [All] of the living things that were on the battlefield.

"....." "....."

Everyone who woke up looked at me with stunned faces.

Meanwhile, I smiled gently at the [Greater Spirit (Uncle)], who promptly returned without a sound to the spirit world.

A~ah, maybe it won't come out again.

..... Well, now,

Who's the [Idiot-san] who laid a hand on my [Prey]...?

Chapter 18: The Demon Princess, Part 1

I walked across the battlefield, leaving angel feathers in my wake.

It seems that most of the humans survived, but only about half of the Daemons could be saved.

Everyone was looking at me stupidly. It seems that even the Daemons could make dumbfounded faces, their spirits having gone beyond their limits.

“.....”

Among them, Rick's face twisted into a look of anger and happiness. when you have such a face, you really resemble Grandfather-sama.

“.....Lucy!”

In that silence where even the sound of the breeze was audible, Noel spoke out.

When he moved to rush towards me, several of the blank-faced Daemons reacted and drew their weapons.

.....suu.

At that time, something black dropped onto my shoulder directly from above.

[.....]

A silent pressure..... Rinne's [Black Cat] mode froze the battlefield with a *light* release of his [Killing Intent] hey, what're you doing?

If you got exposed as a [Demon], I would get suspected by association.

Gradually, the humans and Daemons began to clamor, and unrest spread among them.

[...I-is that a tiny Demon Beast-sama?] [By any chance, did that lass tame it?] [Saint-sama, amazing~!] [Wait, what? She made Demon Beast-sama her familiar...?] [Princess Yurushia, why do you have wings?!] [.....eh~... that girl is such a monster...] [As ex~pect~ed, Princess-sama! (laugh)] [Yurushia-sama..... please step on my face!] [A-angel-sama...?] [I don't think you can make a

Demon Beast a familiar...] [.....Did she help us...?] [That girl, she's really scary for some reason.....] [Yuru-sama's wings (laugh)] [Such a beautiful face..... dang] [Saint-sama, scary~]

“.....”

Uhhhmmm..... I feel like some terrible things were being said.

For the time being, Bree-chan and Sara-chan, definitely need to be punished later.

“.....Who..... are you!?”

Is that magic? An old man that was floating in the sky yelled with a voice that could pop a vein.

[... {It's the Daemon Mage}]

“{Well, I wonder if this was caused by him.”}

I was talking to Rinne in such a way that only we could hear each other.

This place was strange. Even though so many people had died, their souls didn't appear.

[Someone] had collected the [Souls] on this battlefield..... My demons were horrible bastards.

But the criminal wasn't any of the children.

“Was it you who did *this*? ”

“.....”

The old man refused to answer me even as he stared at me. I wonder just how much he was aware of it.

“The war is over. I have reached an understanding with Daemon King-san after some [Persuasion].”

“...What?”

Not only the old man, but the Daemons and the humans all raised their voices.

Even if they didn't believe it normally, but with me, who had put my

[Ridiculousness] out on full throttle, I think that it should be accepted..... Even if I didn't intend for it.

Now then, what will this person do?

I used my wings to rise up to the same height as the old man, and I carefully directed and released my Demonic [Presence].

“...!?”

The old man's eyes went wide, and he began to sweat profusely even as his face was full of dread. Fear... suffering... despair..... his [Soul] was just filled to the brim.

Ah..... oh my..... It looked delicious.

“.....aA...aAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA?!”

When I smiled involuntarily, the old man went mad and cried out.

“Demon! Demon Highness! By the [Contract], open the gates of time and space!”

...huh? Did he contract with a Demon somewhere? So he was gathering the souls.

[Yurushia, be careful..... I sense the presence of a high-ranking Demon.]

“.....looks like it.”

The color of the sky transformed unnaturally, and the humans and Daemons began to clamor.

“...Ah, that, you'll die if you don't leave.”

I felt something strange in the ground, and when I called out to them, the Daemons and humans scattered like baby spiders from that place.

..... by chance, did they think that I would kill them?

[The bottom of the earth opened...]

As Rinne's words flowed into my ear, a [Black Whirlpool] appeared on the ground as if it had been waiting, and began to swallow those who ran away.

“[Let there be light!]”

Instantly, I spread out the holy magic [Sanctuary], and sealed the whirlpool that was still drawing things in.

But, in that momentary gap that I showed, that old man had jumped into the whirlpool.

..... He escaped.

Ah, oh no, I wonder if I had messed this up one way or another? The [Sanctuary] stopped the suction, but the black whirlpool began to spread through little by little.

Is this bad? I don't think it'd be so terrible a thing as to swallow the world, [If you don't close it soon, all the living beings here will be wiped out.]

"Rinne..... can you do something?"

[I am specialized in [Breaking]. You are far better than I am at that, being a [Devil].]

"Yes, but....."

I can use the power of a Devil, but truth be told I'm not particularly skillful at fine control.

I'm daintily rough.If anyone else said that, though, I would hit them.

"No problem."

"Uwaa"

Looking back at the abrupt speech, the four attendants were standing there along with Noa.

Everyone had a desperate look trying to deal with the situation, but the atmosphere wasn't tense. Good grief, whose fault was this.

"Then, what will you all do?"

"Please leave it to us. Open... [Lost Paradise]"

"...hah?"

As the black space immediately expanded, and wrapped around the [Black whirlpool], the black space disappeared like it had been swallowed..... what is

that? It's the first time I saw it.

"It's a failure."

"How fast!"

If one looked closely, some of the wisps of the whirlpool were still there, and it sparked on contact with the [Sanctuary].

Noa was working fast, but I don't know anything but the basics, so I gave up.

"Maintain the status quo...?"

"...that would be good, maintain it for several hours."

Opening the golden magic-engraved pocket watch that I had given him, he spoke matter-of-factly.

"Is it hard to break it up from inside—?"

When Nia said so, Tina and Fannie smiled Demonic smiles. Well... there's no choice but to do so in the end?

The size of the whirlpool is about 2 meters. When we descended onto the ground, the two boys came rushing towards us.

"Lucy..."

"Oi, this is dangerous..."

Noel and Rick tried to follow us, and the two of them were playing at something.

".....I see"

This is probably a pocket dimension made by an unknown Demon.

People who had a holy [Air] or a strong aura of [Malice] couldn't enter it.

"Rick, Noel, [We] can't enter this. Don't worry. It will turn back to normal."

"Such a thing..... only Lucy..."

"I don't think there's a need to worry since it's you....."

... Hey.

"Well, in that case, I'm off"

We went into the vortex with the cheeriest voice that I could muster, as we were sent off by the people who were looking on worriedly.

..... I'm not letting such a delicious soul escape so easily.

However, I didn't notice.

There was someone with a strong will and deep [Malice] that was staring at our backs.....

* * *

[Here are the souls of the people who were here... if it is not enough, I will gather as much as needed.]

That was the price he..... the price of the [Contract] between Geas and the Demon.

Geas had named himself as such so that he would never forget his status and oath.

Geas, who had obtained knowledge and secret arts from the Demons, had used magic against the adults as a baby child, and killed a person for the first time.

Then Geas had lived through summoning Lesser Demons in order to promote himself.

The number [999] had appeared in his peripheral vision after he had contracted with the Demon, but three years had passed before he even noticed it.

The amount of souls that that Demon wanted in order to break through the walls between dimensions was huge.

Still, knowing of the existence of high-quality souls, he steadily gathered them, and became able to collect them well.

“.....Is the number decreasing?”

He noticed that the number that hadn't changed thus far was decreasing like a counter.

“What's going on? Please answer me, Lord Heraness.”

The named Demon that called itself Heraness declared.

[When that number reaches [0], your wife will cease to be your [Wife].]

“.....Wh...at?”

Heraness showed images of the [Other World] inside Geas' brain.

There, his wife, his childhood friend, was being handed a ring from an unknown man, and was laughing with an embarrassed face.

His wife was a little older than when he knew her. It seemed that since then... a few years had passed since he had disappeared.

[The number decreases by one a day. This image is a picture of the [Future]. When that number disappears, your wife will give up, and become the property of another man.]

Geas sank to his knees in disbelief.

The counter numbered [627]..... so if the words of the Demon were to be believed, in less than two years, that image would become [Reality].

“.....T-, two years...?”

The amount of souls that he had collected in these three years, was only about 20% of the amount. Regardless of how efficiently he collected them, he would not be able to fulfil more than half in less than two years.

To the terrified Geas, the Demon whispered.

[Then, put in that

[Number]

of souls. In compensation for that number, the counter will increase.]

Increase the number on the counter with souls, and delay the time.

Since that day, Geas' hardships began, and a century had passed.

*

[What's wrong, Geas. You've only gathered about 70% of the souls.]

The Space-Time Gate..... the so-called subspace. In its deep dark innards, the man sitting on the throne whispered.

A slender, slim body. Bright red lips on a beautiful face of pure white. Combing his fingers through his long, rust-colored hair, his golden snake-like eyes reflected Geas' image with a tinge of amusement.

"Heraness..... I've reached the limit. I don't have any more time..."

While shedding tears from his old, weathered body, Geas fell onto his knees.

[If you use half the souls now, won't you be able to extend the deadline for another few years?]

"It's impossible now. My body doesn't have many years left in it....."

[Would you rather give up? Wow, the heart of a human sure is fickle. Even if she became the property of another man, and had a child and became happy, you only need to steal it. Isn't it easy...? Fufufu]

".....Su-such a thing"

Heraness knew that Geas was already at his limit.

That was why he thought that it was time to destroy that heart and harvest that soul full of despair.

[Well, to deprive, to kill, you've done all these just to gather souls? You should be able to do it easily. ...

Fufuhahahahahahahahahahahahahahahahaha]

Chapter 19: The Demon Princess, Part 2

“.....Al. Are you sure you don’t want to come?”

“.....”

Alfio couldn’t reply to Anteikowa the Elf’s, words.

It was the first time he’d gone to war. The threatening power of the real Hero. A raging, large-scale magic. Even the Daemons were afraid of the genuine Saint, who had healed tens of thousands of the injured in a flash.

The girl that he had thought was collaborating with the Daemons had brokered peace with the Daemons, and in addition, she rushed in to a horrible place where even he could not enter as a Hero.

It was like a black vortex that continued into hell.

Since he had memories of his previous life, he thought that it would be impossible to head into such a place, where common sense didn’t exist.

Anteikowa, who had been called a [Saint] as well, was having issues when compared with a true Saint, and Alfio who was also trying to show his power as a [Hero].

But she didn’t recognize that she wasn’t the [Real Thing], or that the Hero that she had chosen was a [Fake].

“Really..... In that case, I will be walking my own path from here on in.”

“Eeh..... Anko...?”

Anteikowa pulled her hand out of Alfio’s outstretched hand, and then began to collect her things.

“Well, err..... Al, I will also be going back to my home.”

“Ch-Cheria...?”

Looking somewhat sorry, the swordswoman Cheria began to pack her equipment beside Anteikowa.

“Al is a hero... I would be happy if I could help. But, I am about to get married,

and my parents are starting to getting annoyed”

In other words, if he wasn’t a hero, then they wouldn’t want to spend time with him normally.

“Bye then, Al. It was fun up until now. I will go home escorted by Anko.”

“Thank you for your help. Let’s go, Cheria.”

“.....O-oi...”

Even as he spoke in an inaudible, husky voice that couldn’t be heard, the two of them turned around, and broke away from Alfio.

“.....”

Alfio crumbled as if he had been knocked over, as his lovers experienced a change of heart even after they’d travelled together for years.

Alfio didn’t know what had gone wrong. Was it because he didn’t have the [Courage] to fight like a hero? It was really impossible to avoid that much danger.

Someone gently approached Alfio who was stuck there without an answer.

“.....E-err... Al-sama...?”

“.....Ophe~...?”

Alfio faltered as he looked at the only girl that remained.

When he thought about it, Alfio had no memory of interacting or conversing much with Ophelia.

He saw her only as the [Younger sister of the beautiful noble sister siblings], and since she was 13 at the time, he was more fascinated with the beauty and nobility of Athena, but had invited her anyway, being unable to lay his hands on the two of them, since they were very young.

A younger sister who couldn’t do anything without her older sister; a girl that liked the things her sister liked, and turned herself away from the things her sister didn’t.

Only such a little girl... called out to Alfio by herself.

Athena had recently been cold towards Alfio. Be that as it was, Alfio didn't know why Ophelia was calling out to him.

"A-Al-sama, please cheer up... those two... they... if you do your best, they will come back."

Speaking for herself for the first time, Ophelia's words raised Alfio's spirits.

"Ophe~....."

Alfio felt like he had finally seen what the inside of this girl was like.

Clumsy, weak, foolish, a simpleton, an idiot... and yet really gentle.

".....A, Al-sama...?"

"Opheeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!"

"Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!?"

As Alfio tried to hug Ophelia with a teary face that was overflowing with emotion, Ophelia screamed and fell backwards on her butt.

"I, I was a foooooool..... It's fine if only Ophe remained. Let's go home and start a farm. Let's work hard to do food processing. I won't let you be poor; I will never cheat on you, so please marry meeeeeeeeeeeeeeee"

"eh? ah, Yes... EeeeeeeeEEEEEEEEEHHHHH???"

Ophelia replied despite being in a huge fluster. She was surprised by Alfio and his actions, and held on to his crying face that was like a child's, quietly stroking it.

Alfio had finally gained the [Courage] to live as a true person after experiencing two lives.

Ophelia also finally remembered that he was to be 15 this year, the age of marriage.

What would her sister say if she saw this situation?

And if those two who went elsewhere were to know that the two of them were going to get married.....

{.....ah.}

Ophelia, who was always following at the back in the Shiguresu Hero party remembered well the contents of the [Wanted Poster] she noticed as they left the last city.

{Strangely, there were a lot of features of Alfio listed... Since there're few Elves here, they would stand out, but will be okay to go to the town?}

* * *

“[FuhahahahahahaAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA]”

“[Haa!?]”

Heraness jumped back with a startled face as he noticed a golden-haired girl that was laughing in the same way next to him.

“[You!]”

“Oh, I’ve been rude. I am Yurushia. I’m pleased to make your acquaintance.”

With not even a shred of tension, plucking at the hem of her black and silver dress was a [Devil] that was gracefully greeting him, and Heraness' face warped.

And at his other shoulder...

"[Yurushia, that is one of the Demon World's Seven Pillars, the [Demon Lords] ... well, now it's 6 pillars. That's one of them.]"

The violent [Demon Beast] that had killed and eaten one of the pillars of the Demon World, the [Demon Lords], was sitting there as a black cat.

“Then it’s considerably strong, Rinne?”

“[It’s weaker than I am. Or rather, it’s the weakest among the [Demon Lords]. It’s just a little bit stronger than Yurushia.]”

“Fuuhn~”

“[.....]”

He was irritated by that attitude that lacked in nervousness, and it seemed both of them were Demons that were [Named] just like Heraness, the first in thousands of years, with uncertain abilities, and usually the [Demon Lords] paid

attention to the new [Devils].

Moreover, they were even able to [Manifest] here fully due to his negligence, something that even he couldn't do.

"[Welcome, Yurushia, and Rinne. Welcome to my, Heraness', base... or perhaps I should say it was good of you to have come. This is a pocket dimension that I made for the sake of connecting to the material world. If you were an ordinary Demon..... no, because you are Demons, you shouldn't have been able to make it here easily.]"

Because of that he was careless.

Heraness knew that there was an unknown [Demon] that was near Geas that could be called an [Irregularity], but he didn't think that it would get involved.

An unknown [Demon]..... How could such a ridiculous existence be born?

"Is that so? I was able to come normally..."

"[It's only just because of [Yurushia]. If I wasn't on your shoulder, I wouldn't know if even I would be able to reach it properly. In fact, the four of them haven't arrived yet, right?]"

"Ah~... that's *true*."

The three kinds of Demons that stood at the top of the Demon World, a [Demon Lord], a [Demon Beast], and a [Devil] were together in a narrow space that was not even a tenth of the world, that should never have happened.

Moreover, this [Relaxed] atmosphere should be impossible.

Even though there are three pillar Demons, even though the magic power and miasma swirled, and even as the space began to decay, it would not be strange to say that this would become a second Demon World where lesser Demons would spawn infinitely.

"By the way..."

Yurushia's atmosphere changed, and there was a slimy, coal-tar-like presence.

"Hirai-san, won't you give me this?"

"[Who, is that...]"

Heraness was puzzled by the feeling of wanting to make multiple questions at the same time, but forcibly returned it to the main line of questioning forcibly.

"[Is this.....? You knew that there was a [Contract] with me, cousins?]"

There was Geas surrounded by the three Greater Demon Pillars, on the verge of death and madness. Heraness' appearance cheered upon seeing a decent reaction.

The contracts of Demons were [Absolute]. If one broke it of their own will, it would cause [self-denial], and their very existence would be compromised.

Trying to nullify it was to be declare complete hostilities to that Demon, and indeed, it was as if they were proclaiming their [Enmity] towards [Demon Lord] Heraness.

And yet.....

"Did you say something? Monkey-san"

A beautiful Demon girl that had a smile like a flower.

With that one line, Heraness' face distorted into that of a Demonic monkey, and the [Demon Beast] that was on the shoulder of the [Devil] breathed a quiet sigh.

In that instant, Heraness and Yurushia's hands stretched towards Geas at the same time, and as their hands clashed, discernible sparks scattered, and Heraness grasped Geas with one hand and fled to the rear.

The right sleeve of the Yurushia's dress was broken, and Heraness bled black from where he had been struck across the left cheek, even as he laughed.

"[...Fast. But, it's my win here.]"

Even as he spoke Heraness flew backwards and disappeared into a big door that was formed from the shadows.

*

".....He got away."

"[The opponent is a several-thousand-year-old [Demon Lord], after all. An [Arch demon] would have been annihilated with that amount.]"

“Am I not old enough?”

While looking at my dress that was happily sucking up my magic power to regenerate itself, I appropriately responded to Rinne’s sermon.

But it was strong indeed. Before I fought against Rinne I would have been afraid.

“[...Are you planning on pursuing?]”

“Of course.”

“[Stop that. The space is especially strange on the other side. I thought of it looking at this subspace, that Heraness might be doing research to connect dimensions. It is said that it’s not easy for a [Devil] to return after travelling through many dimensions.]”

“Un~.....”

But, there weren’t many souls like that of that grandpa’s. It looked like karasumi and seemed delicious.....

“...Master!”

“Yurushia-sama!”

She heard voices of the followers who had finally caught up.

If even those children took this much time, it must really be a scary space. Anyway, they were all assembled. Nn...? 5 people?

“There’s one person extra...?”

“Excuse me. It was picked up along the way.”

Tina dropped the person she was carrying in front of me appropriately. It’s sloppy.

“Araara, well, well.”

“.....Yurushia...”

I didn’t expect to see this person in such a place.

“It’s been a while, Athena-onee-sama. How are you?”

I gave her a happy, sweet smile, while she stared at me with her teeth out.

“Ara, that’s no good.”

“Annoying. You, after all, had connections to the Daemons! I know that that Demon Beast was also one of your [Familiars] originally!”

“Hohoo.”

Those are some interesting things being said.

Fannie burst out with a [Fuu] while looking at Rinne, but well, such things don’t matter.

“To say these kinds of things expressly, in this dangerous place..... is it love?”

“Don’t joke around!”

Crap, this is too fun. After all, it’s great fun to [play around] with onee-sama.

“Fannie, take Onee-sama outside. I’ll return after relaxing and *enjoying myself.*”

“Yes~”

“What are you saying!? I just told you not to joke around. I will reveal all of your evil deeds, to Father-sama,”

“What would Yurushia-sama like to do?”

As if onee-sama wasn’t even there, Noa was confirming the future schedule. From Noa’s view, it seems onee-sama was as good as absent from the schedule. ...don’t tremble, me.

“I-I well,”

“Well, yes, now that you mention it, this place does seem to be pretty badly distorted.”

“Wai-”

“Is it okay to withdraw? In the meantime, I’ll send you all several thousands of subordinates for examination.”

“Hey...”

“What... subordinates? thousands!? What is that!?”

“Listen.”

You're being annoying, onee-sama.

"EEi!"

"...eh?"

With no sense of caution to a surprise attack at all, I dropped Rinne from my shoulder, and went through the big door that was open with onee-sama.

"....."

".....Fuhn"

She came along..... Athena onee-sama.

"[Yurushia!]"

"Master, are you alright?"

I could hear everyone's voice from the other side of the door. I couldn't see the other side, but it looked like it wasn't completely disconnected.

"I'm fine. Don't come over this way."

"But..."

"It's fine it's fine"

I tried to reach out to the door for now.

"Fu~n"

"How is it~?"

"It seems to be difficult to return through this door..... I'll look for another... Now, then"

I turned my eyes towards onee-sama who was still staring at me.

"It's just the two of us..... onee-sama."

".....Wh-, what?"

As I gradually leaked out my [Presence], onee-sama's complexion began to turn white.

"Fufuu. You said something interesting earlier? ...about Father-sama?"

".....It's unrelated."

This reaction.....perhaps.

"Unless, when I was born, I had monopolized all of Father-sama's affection..... is it?"

"....."

".....You're honestly being very disobedient."

"Shut up!"

To let things get into such a state..... she's guilty of letting things go too far.

"How old were you when you became twisted?"

"Shut up shut up! I know that you're a bad person who's collaborated with the Daemons! Because my blood was pure, you specially caused my engagement annulment, and why with Roderick-sama,"

"Hohoo."

"....."

It seemed that onee-sama was also aware of the fact. It would be bad if the blood became too thick.....

"Really... you're so twisted."

"SHUUT UUP!"

Athena-onee-sama, how cute.....

However. Although it was nice to have a Tsundere, it's a huge amount of trouble for everyone else, you know?

Besides that.....

"Athena onee-sama seems to have misunderstood..."

"Hiie"

When I released the presence of a Demon, the whites of my eyes were corroded with [Black], and my pupils were stained a bloodlike crimson.

"...ah, ...Aa"

At my onee-sama who was speechless, I smiled quietly at her, showing her my

red crystalline fangs.

"As you can see, I am... a [Demon] after all."

I thrust myself at my sister's throat, while she was frozen with fear.

"Aaaa, ...a, Ah."

Sweet... Sweet! What a sweet soul! It was even better than that beauty's... better than most.

I wanted to slurp it all up at once. ...But, aaaah, it was wasteful.

But...

"Puhaaa"

A small amount of blood. While halfway through taking the soul, I took my mouth off of my sister's throat.

As expected, it was best to slurp it up while it was alive.

Sitting down my mute, hollow-eyed sister, I spoke to her kindly.

"Athena onee-sama. With half of your soul, I took most of your memory."

".....a..."

"Maybe it will be difficult before you can live a decent life from now on, but please do your best to live. I suppose that if your soul is able to revive, I will get the other half as well."

"....."

If I left about half her soul, she shouldn't become a vampire. It's an experiment, and if it succeeds, I can increase the number of people.

"Tina, Fannie, can you hear me?"

"Yes, Master."

"Yes~"

"I'll send onee-sama over there after this. I think I might be able to send her since her soul is diminished, but please deliver her to Father-sama. She's lost her memory."

Well, then, now that I've tasted the soul of onee-sama. I'd really like to harvest another, you know?

Chapter 20: The Demon Princess, Part 3

"[Well, Geas..... You can stop holding it in. It's okay to speak your desires. With this special soul, I will send you to the time when that girl was *happy*.]"

Deep within the plane... In the [Laboratory] that created [Doors] to various dimensions, the Demon Heraness whispered into the ears of Geas.

A strong soul that could cross over to another world wasn't too rarely seen, but after maturing the soul for over a hundred years, it was about time to harvest it.

Deliberately, the last stroke..... The Demon broke Geas' heart to injure his soul.

"[Take the girl. It's easy with your power. Even if she has become the thing of another man, even if they have already made a child, you should just kill it and take it all.]"

".....Such a thing... she"

"[Isn't it fine...? Aren't you the only one able to bring happiness to her? Is it okay for her to be happy with someone other than you? Is it acceptable that you have been deprived of your rightful place?]"

".....Aaah..."

The Cruel [Demon's whisper] tore at his heart, and Geas covered his face with his hands as he shed tears.

At this sight, an expression of joy floated on the *Demon's* face,

"[Why are you troubled? You should just do whatever you like. Take back what was taken from you]"

"I can't do... such a thing"

"[Then, let me show you their current situation. This is reality.]"

In the darkness of the plane, the scenery of another world was shown to Geas.

"[Look...Right now, that unknown man is taking out the ring. Look closely at the face of the woman that was your wife.]"

"Have all her feelings for me already been lost?"

"[You are already past tense to her now. Are you alright with that...? Did you really believe that she would keep waiting for you?]"

"A woman's heart is as fickle as an autumn sky... didn't you know that?"

"[Yes, yes.....]"

"....."

"....."

"[...Whaat!?]"

In that moment, he realized that there was a golden-haired girl that was torturing Geas together with him, Heraness flew off in a hurry and took his distance.

"[Y-you, how did you get here!?]"

"Ara, I'm here to obstruct you, Hera... he... Hyacinth-san"

"[Who the heck is that!]"

Heraness' angry roar shook the entire plane, and Yurushia who was bad at remembering names of people made a slightly embarrassed expression as the ends of her eyebrows drooped, and she hid her mouth with a black fan.

"A monkey did it. By the way, your breath smells..... I can smell it even from here. Do you have an upset stomach?"

"[.....You bitch]"

If his stomach was really upset, Heraness really wanted to say that it was her fault, but somehow, he got the feeling that that would be falling into the pace of this strange Demon.

His intuition was proven right as a strange atmosphere was born the moment that he noticed her [Presence] that made him dizzy.

First of all: how did she even get here?

Other than Heraness, only people who had [Committed a Sin] or were those who [Had Malicious Intent] could pass through that gate, and if other Demons and spirits tried to pass through, they would take considerable amounts of time and magic power.

Even if it was a limit-exceeding [Devil], it was no exception.

Then..... who was this [Demon] that was in front of him.....?

[.....Coming to a place like this alone... Young [Devil], aren't you too overconfident in your own power?]

He would search for it later.

Just now Heraness had retreated due to the presence of Rinne, the [Demon Beast].

It was rare for conflicts to happen between the high-ranking Demons in the Demon World, and even if they destroyed their opponent, since others would know that their powers were weak afterwards, they would come to destroy them.

The only exception that Heraness had never ever thought of fighting was the [Dark Beast] that struck out with his fangs without fear of death.

But that [Demon Beast], would take several months to reach this place.

"What can I do with me alone...?"

"[That's what I said, Yurushia.]"

Gradually... as the two peak Demons began to leak out their [Presence], Geas' body began to spasm as his soul withered.

"Oops... Please wait. If you do, I'll show you something good."

"[.....Are you hesitant now?]"

"Well, well, if you want to [Finish] that human soul, there are also a few methods."

"[.....]"

The Demon watched and waited as Yurushia talked to Geas with a smile on her face.

"Geas-san? I've been doing my best for a long time.It's been more than 50 years."

".....eh?"

50 years. Feeling something strange about those words, Geas raised his head.

Geas had been collecting souls for over 100 years. What in the world was this little girl saying?

"That spectacle..... I know of it a little. However, I'd have thought it a dream..... That scene is at least 40 to 50 years in the past, from what I know."

"eh... wh-.....what?"

"It's strange. You didn't think much about what you were [Seeing]. Perhaps, you were misled about the flow of time?"

"...Wh-"

The sight that Geas had been shown at the age of 3 had been [Current] events then.

Heraness had lied to Geas with words of the [Future], and adjusted Geas' perception of time so that she would be at the cusp of happiness with another man when Geas reached his limit.

"To think that thanks to your perseverance, it would take 50 years."

When Yurushia glanced his way, Heraness' face abruptly grimaced.

Heraness' original plan had been around 30 years. He had probably meant to break Geas' heart by showing him his [Wife] surrounded by her husband and a child when he was an [Old Man] at the age of 60.

But Geas had held out for 50 years..... and had held out for 100 years.

"Even for Demons, to foresee the future and to control time is impossible, you know? The first thing you were shown was real... How many years have passed since then?"

".....a...AAA, AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!"

Geas crumbled down crying when he heard the [Truth]..... and the reality of the situation.

He didn't know whether he would live more than 50 years from the time when he was 22.

The soul of Geas was dyed in despair.....

To break the hearts of those who had been deceived, there was nothing better to say than the [Truth].

And... to Geas who was in this state, Yurushia handed him a small *box* with a smile.

"Geas-san, please make your wish. Make a [Contract] with me."

"[You bitch! What are you saying?!]"

Heraness pressed angrily to Yurushia, who was trying to snatch his prey from the side. ... But

"[Wh-this is..., why!?]"

At the instant he approached the two, Heraness noticed that time seemed to slip, and that he was seeing double.

"[YurushiaaaaaAaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!!!!!!]"

A [Devil] who understood the hearts of men, and collected souls with sweet words.

There was a remarkable difference between souls that were collected by killing and those obtained by a [Contract].

For that reason, Yurushia had set a trap.

By including the [Spirit Language] in the conversation,

"[The flow of time was tampered with.]"

"[That Demon cannot foresee the future nor can he control the time of the world.]"

And, with those words, she had delayed the [Observed] time of Heraness by several dozen seconds with that [Demonic Magic].

And in the meantime, she brought everything to an end.

".....Please... kill me."

“Yes. Thank you for your contract—”

bon....

“[AAAAAAAAAAAAAA]”

In front of Heraness' eyes, Yurushia shattered Geas' body in an instant, and made it disappear.

“fufu...”

In Yurushia's hands was Geas' soul, which had been stained black with deep despair.

In Heraness' eyes, he could clearly see that all the sins, all the despair within that soul had been chained by the [Contract], and bound to Yurushia.

“[.....You did it. Yurushia...]”

“The moment when you were unable to fulfil Geas' wish, the contract between you two was gone. Well... even I didn't think that I would be able to do this much. I was quite desperate.”

Yurushia gently took a breath and gestured as if she was wiping away her sweat as she did the unreasonable.

In the first place, why was she, a newly born [Devil], able to so naturally swindle a [Demon Lord]?

While saying that Demons couldn't manipulate the time of the world, how was she an existence that could cheat time locally?

“Ever since I was called a Devil, I've been getting strange knowledge about how to use my power..... Is this normal?”

“[.....]”

It was certainly true that as a Demon's [Class] went up, they would acquire new [powers].

But the [Devil] in front of him was just too irregular.

In any case.

“[.....To obtain that soul, I must destroy you]”

“.....Is that so?”

Yurushia spoke lightly as she threw out the soul of Geas that she had worked hard for all too easily.

“[Wha... Oi!]”

Geas’ soul fell through the door of [Space-time] that was being used in an experiment, and disappeared to a place where the Demons couldn’t reach.

“[Why would you do that?!]”

Even as Heraness’ anger filled the plane, Yurushia’s relaxed smile didn’t change.

Heraness didn’t understand what this [Devil] was trying to do.

This [Devil] was just too [Different].....

“[Has there ever been a [Devil] like you..... However, you’re not a [Demon Beast]. You can’t even be a [Demon Lord]. Just [What] are you...!?]”

As the [Hostility] and [Bloodthirst] overflowed from the two high-ranking demon pillars, the plane cracked, and the dimension screamed.

Yurushia tilted her head slightly, as she smiled lightly at Heraness, and her cherry-colored lips spilled the words into the darkness.

“...[Demon Princess]...”

That sweet smile, turned into the gruesome [Demon]’s smile.

The two high-ranking pillars then began to fight wordlessly, their impacts shocking and destroying the plane, for several months without end.

Chapter 21: And so, a Legend was born...

A man was born in a small town in Japan.

When he was born, he wondered why he felt like some kind of [Compulsory Gift], and he marveled at the foreign [Brands] that he didn't know, but other than that, he grew up ordinary and normal.

From a young age, he was a child that was more sensitive towards familial love over others.

Ever since he was a child, he had been searching for [Someone].

He wished to return somewhere... Without any knowledge of [Where] that place was, he graduated from college, and when he'd gotten a job and started to live alone, he met [Her].

She was a lady who seemed to have lost her husband right before she was about to be married.

She lived in the apartment where she was to live with her [Husband] without returning to her parents, and lived while thinking of her husband that had suddenly gone missing.

The man fell in love with her. Although the woman wasn't extraordinarily beautiful, her tears stopped the moment he saw her, and before he had noticed, he was calling out to her.

Naturally, he had been rejected by her at first.

However, the man was still not willing to give up. This was the one that he'd been looking for ever since he'd been born, and he thought that he'd finally found it.

Three years passed, and he gradually healed her sorrow, and she seemed to miss the [Presence] of a man, and so the ice in her heart gradually melted.

Ever since he was young, he was being driven by this [Black Chain] on his mind.

In his pocket was an engagement ring that he'd poured three months' salary

into.

As he grasped it and gathered himself, he could hear a cat's [Nyaa] as if it was encouraging him.

* * *

A few months later, the [Black Vortex] disappeared after the girl called the [Saint of the Holy Kingdom] had gone in.

Nobody knew what had happened, and the girl never returned from that place.

The people prayed to the gods that the girl would return, even though rumors went that the [Saint] had sealed the evil at the expense of her own body.

There couldn't be a settlement between the Daemons and humans.

The survivors of the Daemon King's army had been touched by the *mercy* of the [Saint], and went back to the Daemon King's territory without fighting any further, and after that, under the name of the Daemon King Hebrad, a non-aggression pact was made with the human nations.

The human nations were scared of the Forest of Monsters, and had never thought of robbing the Daemon Kingdom of its wastelands by force, and accepted the non-aggression pact, and the way to the Daemon Kingdom was sealed.

Later, according to the tales that travelled out, the Daemon King had apparently become devoted to the creation of strange seaweed dishes, and married a beautiful Dwarf princess.

".....Uho"

"That's right. That girl will come again."

"Uho~"

"Hahaha, that's good. When that girl comes, let me know."

The humans were saddened by the fact that the Saint didn't return, but those who knew the girl didn't despair or become lost hope.

After the girl had rushed into the black vortex, her attendants had returned

once, and brought back a single message along with a girl who'd lost her memory.

[I went somewhere that's a little troublesome, so I'll be coming back home in about 1~2 years. Father, Mother, I'm sorry to make you worry, but I'll leave Sister-sama in your care.]

With that polite sentence that was unmistakably like her, all of the people present had delicate expressions on their faces.

But it was thanks to her [Virtue] that the heavy atmosphere lightened with that.

The companions of the girl with amnesia that'd been rescued were already gone, and the elf and the female swordsman seemed to have been arrested by the guards in the city of Kolkopo, so she was sent home to Tariterudo where she'd been born.

And, the girl with amnesia.....

"Athena-chan, call me mother."

".....Ye...s..."

Athena lived in a separate residence from Duke Verusenia's official one, under the protection of Duke Folt and Duchess Riastea.

A girl who'd lost most of her emotions along with her memory.

A girl who could do the bare minimum, and had become like a child.

Riastea felt pity for her, and took care of her as if she was her own, but the situation barely improved after six months.

It wasn't uncommon for her to become dazed throughout the day, and the maids who had been harmed by her had initially hated her, but now, they took the initiative to talk to her.

Athena also began to learn to talk little by little, but her emotions barely returned.

Only one.....

"Athena-sama, there's a visitor for you"

The boy called the [Holy Warrior] of the Holy Kingdom came to see her at times.

The boy regretted being unable to convince Athena who was both his relative and a childhood friend, and came around to see her once every few days.

A girl who fell in love with the same prince as her mother and couldn't be honest about her feelings, would only occasionally smile then.

The friends of the girl felt lonely rather than sad.

They believed that she was safe, but lived in loneliness and resentment for not being able to meet her.

"I wonder when Yu-Yuru will come back"

"Why, are you worried?"

Timothy, who was in the [Kyle Imperial Palace Garden], replied relaxedly while holding the indignant Beatrice by the shoulder.

What was the reason for this? At first Betty didn't really understand, and it seems that he liked her during the time when they were a couple in school, and she was the [Prime Candidate for the Fiancé of the First Prince]..... that is, Timothy's wife.

While it remained to be seen was whether this [disappointingly neat and trim black haired maiden] would be the future Queen, but unexpectedly it seemed that she got along very well with the light and fluffy Timothy. She was still anxious.

The Hero of the Holy Kingdom gained the title of [Count] at the tender age of 13 as a result of successfully repelling the Daemon King's Army.

Although various calculations and intentions were hidden behind this, Noel, who had never attended magic school despite having an aptitude for magic, was sent to the magic school in the capital for the sake of improving his connections and refinement as a noble against his will.

For him, though, there was unexpectedly an [Enemy] waiting for him there.

"Noel-sama, where are you going! Are you going to search for Yuru-sama!?"

"Shelly-san, please don't follow me."

Noel had gone out of the school many times during the break in search of the girl who was the Saint.

But, no matter how much of a [Hero] he was, he couldn't go looking on the other side of the dimension, and as a consequence he was frustrated with the distance of the school.

Originally, he had been surrounded by the female students, but now there were no girls who chose to speak to him, instead surrounding him at a distance.

However, Shelly, who had heard that Noel was going to search for the girl, had followed him about every time, and kept saying that she had come to follow Noel exploring.

"I am not going anywhere today. And aren't the places I go to dangerous? A girl like Shelly-san....."

"It's alright! I've learned to use weapons from Yuru-sama's guardian knights, so, take a look. ...Eii"

Shelly picked up a tree branch and swung it at a speed that wouldn't even have killed an insect.

".....Haa~"

If he took her along, he would surely have to protect both himself and her, Noel sighed.

He knew of Shelly's thoughts and her efforts too. Every time he noticed it, he realized that he couldn't refuse her, and he sighed heavily.

Everyone who knew of that [Saint] girl..... He believed that Yurushia would be safe, but he was anxious to have her come back soon.

That girl wished for the happiness of people, and used her mercy to stop the war with the Daemons, and the depth of her love caused even the evil monsters to repent.

People praised her as the [Legendary Saint], and started to tell tales of her to their children as bedtime stories.

What was Yurushia doing now.....

* * *

"[.....]"

While absorbing the resentment left behind when a high-ranking Demon disappeared that tasted like [butter pancakes covered in vanilla ice-cream and honey], I took a rest at last.

".....Aah~ that was tough."

Just how many days did it take...?

After that last [Meal], I was now completely out of magic power. Although a demon doesn't need to eat or sleep, since it's an [Indulgence], I got annoyed if I couldn't have it.

Ah, uhm, err..... he was stronger than I was.

When his emotions swayed, his more demonic character came through, and although I had to fight unexpectedly, I thought that I had a good chance to win.

Well, victory ended up being through a difference in *stamina*.

"Fuu~..."

I sat on the shattered fragments of the floor that remained, and ate the octopus that was seasoned with souls. Thanks to this, I was able to replenish my magic power in the end.

Nonono, it would be nice if I didn't have any [equipment that was cursed with marine products (dresses)].

I felt an octopus' tentacles while I was fighting, but I was being looked at with horrified eyes.....

Strong monkey-san, I'll never forget your name.Rinne.

".....What's the matter"

I wanted to sigh at this plane that spread out as far as I could see.

At first, there was still a passage and a room, but now there's almost no floor nor ceiling.....in short, the way from which I came has completely collapsed.

Yes, I know I was using my magic absurdly as I rampaged, but for the dimensions to be broken and distorted like this.....

“.....”

For now, I will wait patiently.

My magic power has hardly fully returned, and I've been *waiting for something* too.

I'd made a [Landmark] for myself to return from this broken plane, and it's my aim.

Beyond that, my soul is connected to [Rinne]. I think I'll be able to return someday if I followed it.....

..... swoosh

“[I finally caught up with you, Yurushia]”

“.....”

Rinne, in his black cat mode, suddenly descended onto my shoulder, but why do you have that [I've come now so it's alright] expression on your face, you muscle-brain.

Well, I guess I'll just mofumofu as much as I can.

I'm in the mood now.

“[.....I didn't think you'd lose, but I didn't expect that you'd win.]”

Mofumofu.

“Yeah, but there were various factors. For one, there was someone who taught me to fight during the battle.”

“[In a place like this?who was that?]”

Mofumofu.

“.....Someone who called himself [Onii-chan]...”

“[What's with that.....?]”

Mofumofu.

Ever since I became a Devil, a number of things that I previously didn't know have appeared.

How to distinguish souls. How to use the spirit language. And the Devil magic combined with the Holy magic.....

He taught me all of those. Or rather, I don't know anyone who could do such a thing other than that person.

That youth that had proclaimed that he and I were [Siblings] in an unknown dream.

A true [Devil] that had travelled the dimensions for thousands of years...

"I've got to figure out how to go back....."

"[I'll say this first, it's impossible to rely on the four of them. You see, they too have been chasing the presence of Yurushia.]"

".....Those children... Well, it's okay. I still have my last resort."

I'll keep waiting.

In this laboratory connected to various dimensions. This broken plane, linked to [That Place].

".....come"

A click... and it was finally connected with that small sound.

I thought that it was a [Dream] all this time. But now I realized that it was a [Reality].

"[.....This is]"

A crack ran through the space, and beyond it, high-rise buildings... trains... a myriad of automobiles... an endless cityscape..... it was the [World of Light] that I'd seen in my [Dream].

This was why I released the [Soul] that wanted to return to that place. To discover that [World].

There were many people. A countless number of them.....

There were so many wonderful [Souls] that were so tainted with rot that was

more than I could eat.

"Let's go, Rinne. I'll replenish my souls over there and then return home to where Father and Mother and everyone else is."

A nostalgic world that was full of light. But it's not my hometown any longer. I'll just stop by a bit to get what I need to return.

But what floated up onto my face, was an unbearably delighted smile.....

"Fufufu, it's a pleasure to meet you in person *for the first time*, nostalgic-world-san Now, please excuse this [Demon] coming in."